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WITH OPEN FACE

OR

JESUS MIRRORED IN MATTHEW MARK AND LUKE

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

Of the thirteen chapters contained in this volume, nine have appeared in *The Expositor* in the course of this year. The last four chapters appear now for the first time.

These popular sketches of the spirit and teaching of our Lord, as exhibited in selected scenes from the Evangelic Records, are the overflow from severer studies on the first three Gospels meant to meet the wants of professional students of Scripture. In the preparation of the larger work I have seen some things in a fresh light, of which I endeavour in the following pages to give general readers the benefit.

The last chapter is an attempt to realise an idea which has been in my mind for years: to set forth for the instruction of children, in the form of a historical catechism, the main facts concerning Jesus. The "Christian Primer" may be welcome at the present time, when the subject of Education is again engaging public attention in England. Should it be received with favour, a larger catechism on a similar plan may be attempted hereafter.

A. B. BRUCE.

Glasgow, *September* 1896.

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WITH OPEN FACE

OR

JESUS MIRRORED IN MATTHEW MARK AND LUKE

WITH OPEN FACE

OR

JESUS MIRRORED IN MATTHEW, MARK, AND LUKE

CHAPTER I

THE PROPHETIC PICTURE OF MATTHEW

THE three first Gospels present essentially the same view of Jesus as a preacher, a teacher, and the uncompromising foe of Pharisaism. Yet on closer study distinctive features reveal themselves in their respective delineations. In Mark, which may with much probability be regarded as the earliest Gospel, Jesus is presented realistically as a *man*, with marked individuality in experience, speech, manner, and action. In Matthew He is presented as the *Christ*, in His Messianic dignity, yet as a very human, winsome Messiah. In Luke He appears as the *Lord*, the exalted Head of the Church; still a true man, yet bearing the aspect of a saint with an aureole round His head; near us in His grace towards the sinful, yet in some ways wearing a look of remoteness like a distant range of hills softly tinged with blue.

The first Evangelist, as is well known to all readers,

loses no opportunity of verifying his thesis: Jesus the Christ. Some of his prophetic citations are unimportant, referring to matters purely external, of no significance for the characterisation of Jesus. An extreme example of this class may be found in the closing words of the second chapter: "He shall be called a Nazarene." Apologists have busied themselves in trying to discover the Old Testament basis of the reference, and some in their despair have had recourse to the hypothesis of some lost book of prophecy whence the quotation was taken. Their labour is well meant but vain. Far better to confess that this is one of the weakest links in the prophetic chain of argument, and try to make an apologetic point of its weakness. That really can be done. It is obvious that no one would ever have thought of a prophetic reference in the instance before us unless the fact had first been there to put the idea into his mind. If the home of Jesus had not been in Nazareth, who would have dreamt of searching among the Hebrew oracles for a prophetic anticipation? The fact suggested the prophecy, the prophecy did not create the fact. And this remark may apply to many other instances, where we have not, as in this case, independent means of verifying the fact. Sceptics have maintained that not a few of the Gospel incidents were invented to correspond with supposed Messianic prophecies. The truth probably is that in by far the greater number of cases the historical data were there to begin with, stimulating believers in Jesus as the Christ to hunt up Old Testament texts fitting into them as key to lock.

Some of Matthew's quotations reveal delicate tact and fine spiritual insight. Whatever may be their value as proofs that Jesus was the *Christ*, there can be no doubt at all about their value as indications of what the Evangelist thought of *Jesus*. These indications are all the more valuable that they are given unconsciously and without design. The Evangelist's aim in making these citations is to satisfy his first readers that He of whom he wrote was the Great One whose coming all Jews, Christian and non-Christian, expected. But in pursuing this design he lets us see how he conceives the character and ministry of Jesus, and this is really for us now the permanent religious use of these prophetic texts.

Three of these texts stand out from among the group as specially serviceable for this purpose. The first, quoted from Isaiah ix. 1, 2, is introduced in connection with the settlement of Jesus in Capernaum at the commencement of His Galilean ministry. The important part of the quotation lies in the words: "the people which sat in darkness saw a great light."[1] *Jesus of Nazareth, the Light of the dark land of Galilee* — such is the Evangelist's comprehensive conception of the memorable ministry he is about to narrate. On examining his detailed account we perceive that in his view Jesus exercised His illuminating function both by preaching and by teaching: understanding by the former the proclamation to the people at large of the good news of the kingdom as a kingdom of grace, by the latter the initiation of disciples into the more recon-

[1] *Matt.* iv. 16.

dite truths of the kingdom. But it is to be noted as characteristic of the first of our canonical Gospels that while the preaching function (*kerygma*) of Jesus is carefully recognised, it is to the teaching function (*didache*) that greatest prominence is given. "Jesus," we are told, "went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom."[1] But beyond such general statements little is said concerning the Preaching. On the other hand, of the Teaching, especially that given to disciples, who were indeed its chief recipients, copious samples have been preserved. "The Sermon on the Mount," brought in immediately on the back of the general announcement just quoted, belongs distinctively to the Teaching. However many more might be present, disciples were the proper audience, insomuch that the more appropriate name for the discourse would be, not the *Sermon* on the Mount, but the *Teaching* on the Hill. There Jesus was the light of the few that they might become the light of the world. And He was their light by being their Rabbi. At the close of the discourse the Evangelist makes the comparison between Jesus and the scribes given in Mark in connection with the first appearance of Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum.[2] The comparison implies resemblance as well as contrast. Jesus in the view of our Evangelist was a scribe or Rabbi in function, anti-Rabbinical in spirit, and in virtue of both facts the spiritual light of the land. Because He was a Teacher He might be compared with the other religious teachers of the people

[1] *Matt.* iv. 23. [2] *Matt.* vii. 29; *Mark* i. 22.

whose professed aim it was to communicate to their countrymen the knowledge of God. Because He differed utterly from these teachers in method and spirit, the light He offered was light indeed. For their light the Evangelist believes to be but darkness, the deepest, most ominous phase of the night that brooded over Galilee and other parts of the Holy Land, as he will take pains to show in the course of his story.

The conception of the Christ as the Light-giver implies that the leading Messianic charism is *wisdom*. But that the author of the first Gospel took no one-sided view of Messianic equipment, but fully recognised the claims of *love*, is shown by the prophetic quotation now to be noticed. It also is taken from the Book of Isaiah, and is in these words: "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."[1] In his general preliminary description of the Galilean ministry, Matthew gives a prominent place to a healing function: "healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."[2] The words just quoted from the prophet show us the light in which the healing ministry presented itself to his mind. What struck him most was not the marvellous power displayed therein, but the sympathy, the phenomenal compassion. This was not a matter of course; ordinary people did not so view the remarkable cures which were taking place among them. What gained for Jesus fame among them was, beside the benefit received, the preternatural power evinced by His healing acts. Only a deep glimpse into the heart of Jesus could enable any

[1] *Matt.* viii.17, from *Isa.* liii. [2] *Matt.* iv. 23.

one to see in these acts something more and better than power, and to find in His curative function a fulfilment of the striking Hebrew oracle. Such a glimpse had the Evangelist. He read truly the innermost meaning of the acts, some of which he reports, and so laid his finger on the grand distinction of Jesus. And one who saw the central significance of love in the character of Jesus was not likely to suppose that its manifestation was confined to healing acts. He would expect it to reveal itself also in "gracious words" spoken for the healing of sin-sick souls. And though fewer such words are reported in Matthew than we might have desired, there are some that mean much to one who duly considers them.

By far the most important of our three prophetic oracles is the one remaining to be mentioned. It presents, so to speak, a full-length portrait of Jesus, in prophetic language, which will repay detailed study, feature by feature. This citation, like the other two taken from Isaiah, occurs in Matthew xii. 18–21, and is in these terms :[1]

> "Behold my servant, whom I have chosen;
> My beloved in whom my soul is well pleased:
> I will put my Spirit upon Him,
> And He shall declare judgment to the Gentiles.
> He shall not strive, nor cry aloud;
> Neither shall any one hear His voice in the streets.
> A bruised reed shall He not break,
> And smoking flax shall He not quench,
> Till He send forth judgment unto victory,
> And in His name shall the Gentiles hope."

[1] I quote the Revised Version. The original is in Isaiah xlii. 1–4.

The attractive picture is introduced by the Evangelist at this point in his narrative to show the true Jesus in opposition to the Jesus of Pharisaic imagination — a miscreant deserving to die for Sabbath-breaking and other offences against an artificial religious system. He sees in Jesus the realisation of one of the finest ideal conceptions in Hebrew prophecy — the Servant of God, beloved of God, filled with His Spirit, gentle, peaceable, sympathetic, wise, cosmopolitan, capable of winning the confidence and satisfying the aspirations not of Israelites only but of all mankind. It is the retiring non-contentious disposition of Jesus, manifested in connection with a sabbatic conflict, that recalls the prophetic ideal of Messiah to his mind. The baffled foes of Jesus had left the scene of strife in a truculent temper, taking counsel "how they might destroy Him." Perceiving their threatening mood, Jesus withdrew from the place to avoid giving further offence and precipitating a crisis. In this procedure the Evangelist recognises the Messianic trait: "He shall not strive nor cry aloud, neither shall any one hear His voice in the streets." But he is not content to quote this one sentence: he reproduces the passage in full. Instead of a single trait he shows us the complete picture. It is not a case of loose quotation without considering whether the quoted matter be relevant or irrelevant. Of set purpose he brings in this fair portrait of Jesus just here, skilfully using as a foil to set off its beauty the hideously distorted ideas of Him current in the religious world of Judæa. He takes into his hand the sketch of the ancient Hebrew limner,

holds it up to his readers, and says: Look on this picture and on that. This is Jesus as I see Him, that is Jesus as Pharisees misconceive Him. Which think you is the true Jesus?

How shall we qualify ourselves for judging, what is to be the basis for verification? Must we confine ourselves to the immediate context, or may we roam over the evangelic narrative from its beginning up to this point? I think the Evangelist himself has the whole foregoing story in view, and that that may be the reason why he quotes at length and does not restrict his citation to the one point apposite to the immediate occasion. If so, then we may travel over the preceding pages, that by broad, large observation we may satisfy ourselves that the prophetic delineation answers to the character of Him whose story has thus far been told. The very position of the picture in the book — in the middle, instead of at the commencement — invites us to use the knowledge we have acquired for this purpose. Another Evangelist, Luke, has also presented to his readers an ideal portrait of Jesus, painted in prophetic colours. But his picture comes in very early, serving as a *frontispiece* to his book.[1] Matthew's picture stands right in the centre, so that we cannot help asking, Is the painting like the original as we now know Him?

Let us then study the goodly image in the light of the history going before. "Behold My servant!"

The first trait is the Divine complacency resting on the person whose character is delineated: "My beloved

[1] *Luke* iv. 16–30.

in whom My soul is well pleased." The detested of the Pharisees is the beloved of God. A strong thing to say; what evidence of its truth? The evangelic historian points in reply to the baptismal scene at the Jordan with the accompanying voice from heaven: "Thou My beloved Son."[1] This, of course, would have been no evidence for Pharisees who were not there to hear, and who would not have believed on the report of another that the voice had really been spoken; even as there are many now to whom it is no evidence because of their unbelief in the miraculous. For minds of the Pharisaic type no evidence of any sort could avail to show that such an one as Jesus could possibly be the well-beloved of God. Such minds judge men by external tests and by hard and fast rules, with the inevitable result that they often mistake the best for the worst, and the worst for the best, and say of one who is a true servant and son of God: "Thou hast a devil." Happily there is evidence as to the character of Jesus available for all men of open, honest heart, whether they believe in miracle or not. There is the testimony borne by the unsophisticated spiritual instincts of the soul, which can recognise goodness at sight. Can we not see for ourselves, without voices from heaven, that Jesus of Nazareth, as revealed in His recorded words and acts, is a Son of God, if not in the metaphysical sense of theology, at least in the ethical sense of possessing a God-like spirit? Behold My servant! Yea, a servant indeed: of God, of truth, of righteousness, of *true* truth, of *real* righteousness, with

[1] *Matt.* iii. 17.

rare capacity for discerning between genuine and counterfeit — a brave, heroic, prophetic Man, fighting for the Divine in an evil time, when godlessness assumed its most repulsive and formidable form under the guise of a showy, plausible, yet hollow zeal for godliness. Truly, in the words of the Hebrew oracle, God had put His Spirit upon Him. The descent of the Spirit at His baptism, if not an objective fact, was at least a happy symbol of the truth.

The second trait in the picture is the retiring disposition of Jesus, described in the words: "He shall not strive nor cry aloud, neither shall any one hear His voice in the streets." Interpreted in the light of the immediate situation these words refer to the peaceable spirit of Jesus evinced by His retirement from the scene of recent conflict to avoid further contention, and the intensification of existing animosities likely to result therefrom. But we may give to this part of the picture a larger scope, and find exemplifications in portions of the evangelic history having no direct connection with Pharisaic antagonism. May not the Evangelist have in view here the ascent to the mountain top and the teaching there given to an inner circle of disciples? The love for retirement among nature's solitudes and for the special work of a master instructing chosen scholars was characteristic of Jesus. He did not indeed shun the crowd or the kind of instruction that tells upon, and is appreciated by, the popular mind. His voice *was* heard in the streets, in the synagogue, from a boat on the lake addressing an immense crowd on the shore. He gave Himself with enthusiasm

to evangelism, visiting in succession all the synagogues of Galilee, and never grudging gracious speech to the people wherever they might chance to assemble. Still this was not the work He preferred, nor was He deceived as to its value. "Much seed little fruit" was His estimate of it in the Parable of *the Sower*. He got weary at times of the crush of crowds, and longed for privacy, and made sundry attempts to escape into solitude. He felt the passion of all deep natures for detachment and isolation — to be alone with God, with oneself, with congenial companions capable of receiving truths which do not lie on the surface.

The retirement to the mountain top was one of these escapes, and the "Sermon on the Mount," as it has been called, shows us the kind of thoughts Jesus gave utterance to when His audience was not a street crowd, but a band of susceptible more or less prepared hearers. "When He had sat down, His *disciples* came unto Him, and He opened His mouth and taught them."[1] His first words were the Beatitudes, spoken in tones suited to their import — not shouted after the manner of a street preacher, but uttered gently, quietly, to a few men lying about on the grass, breathing the pure air of the uplands, with eyes upturned towards the blue skies, and with something of heaven's peace in their hearts. In these sayings of the hill we see Jesus at His best, all that is within Him finding utterance in the form of thoughts concerning citizenship in the kingdom, the righteousness of the kingdom, and the grace of the Divine King and Father, which are very new in empha-

[1] *Matt.* v. 1, 2.

sis and felicity of expression, if not altogether new in substance. "Why," we are tempted to ask, "should one capable of saying such things on mountain tops ever go down to the plain below to mingle with the ignorant, stupid mob, not to speak of descending lower still into unwelcome profitless controversy with prejudiced, conceited, malevolent religionists?" But such a question would reveal ignorance of a very important feature in the character of Jesus; viz., that He was not a one-sided man — a mere Rabbi, sage, or philosopher, caring only for intimate fellowship with the select few — but a man who had also a Saviour-heart, with a passion for recovering to God and goodness lost men and women, hungering therefore for contact with the weak, the ignorant, the sinful; making the saving of such His main occupation, and seeking in the companionship of disciples only His recreation.

To this Saviour-aspect of Christ's character the third trait points: "A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench." Broadly interpreted, these words describe the *compassion* of Jesus. The pathetic emblems denote the objects of that compassion: poor, suffering, sorrow-laden, sinful creatures in whom the flame of life temporal or spiritual burnt low, and who in body or soul resembled bruised reeds, frail at the best, rendered frailer still by grief, pain, or moral shortcoming. The pity of Jesus is expressed in negative terms. It is declared that He will not do what many men are prone to do — crush the weak, blow out the flickering flame. The whole truth about Jesus is that He habitually did the opposite with reference to

all forms of weakness represented by the bruised reed and the smoking wick. For verification of the statement we have only to look back over the history. Consider, *e.g.*, the ministry of healing. Think of the multitudes of sick in Capernaum [1] and elsewhere cured of diseases of all sorts — fever, leprosy, palsy, blindness, insanity. Miracles or not, these are facts as well attested as anything in the Gospels. And the subjects of these healing acts might very appropriately be described as physically or mentally bruised reeds. Take, *e.g.*, the man sick of palsy borne of four — what a wreck physically! [2] or the demoniac of Gadara — what a sad tragic wreck mentally! [3] Of moral wrecks also there is no lack of examples. The palsied man is one; a wreck morally not less than physically, a man in whose life vice and disease appear to have been closely intertwined. How then did Jesus treat that man? Did He shun him, or blow out the little flame of goodness that might still be in him, or utterly crush the spirit of hope that was already sorely broken by a hard unfeeling word, or a merciless rebuke? No! He healed the wounded conscience and revived the drooping heart by the gracious word cordially spoken: "Courage, child; thy sins are forgiven." Or look in at that large assembly of "publicans and sinners" in the court of Levi's house in Capernaum.[4] Here is a motley collection of bruised reeds and smoking wicks of all sorts: social outcasts, drunken men, frail women, irreligious, profligate, scandalous people. What is to be done with them? Throw

[1] *Matt.* viii. 16, 17.
[2] *Matt.* ix. 1–8.
[3] *Matt.* viii. 28–34.
[4] *Matt.* ix. 9–13.

them out into the social refuse heap to rot, or take them out in boats and drown them in the lake? Such may have been the secret thoughts of respectable inhuman people in Capernaum, as such are the thoughts of cynical persons now in reference to similar classes of our modern society. Not such were the thoughts of Jesus. Capable of salvation and worth saving even these, said He. Bruised reeds, yes, but the bruise may be healed; smoking wicks doubtless, but the flame may be made to burn clear. Was He too sanguine? No. How strong the reed may become, witness the story of Zacchæus, thoroughly credible, though not told in Matthew;[1] how bright the dying flame, witness the woman in Simon's house with her shower of penitent tears, and her alabaster box of precious ointment.[2] "Much forgiven, much love," was the hopeful creed of Jesus. His ideas on this subject were very unconventional. Religious people as He saw them appear to Him very far from God, and not likely ever to come nigh. On the other hand, those who seemed hopelessly given over to immorality and irreligion He deemed not unlikely subjects for the kingdom. The average modern Christian does not quite understand all this, and perhaps he hopes that Jesus did not altogether mean what He seems plainly to say. But He did mean it, and He acted upon it, and history has justified His belief and policy.

The last trait in our picture is what may be called the cosmopolitanism, or the universalism, of Jesus. "In His name shall the Gentiles hope." That is, He

[1] *Luke* xix. 1–10; *vide* especially *v.* 8. [2] *Luke* vii. 36–50.

is a Christ not for Jews alone, but for mankind. The Hebrew original, as faithfully rendered in the English Bible, means: "The isles shall wait for His law." The two renderings coincide in sense in so far as they express the universal range of Messiah's functions; they differ only in so far as they point to varying aspects of His work. The one exhibits Him as a universal object of trust, *i.e.*, a universal *Saviour;* the other exhibits Him as a universal *Legislator:* the Saviour of the world, the Lord of the world. Now, let it be noted, Jesus could be neither unless He possessed intrinsic fitness for these gigantic tasks. It is not a question of "offices" in the first place, but of character, charisms, endowments. It boots not to tell men that Jesus is Christ, and that as such He exercises the functions of prophet, priest, lawgiver, king, so long as they do not see that He possesses the gifts and the grace necessary for these high functions. He must have it in Him by word, deed, spirit, experience to inspire trust, and to make men look to Him for *law*, *i.e.*, for the moral ideal of life. When men are convinced of His power in these respects, they will accept Him as their Christ; possibly not under that name, for some fastidious disciples may be inclined to discard the title as foreign and antiquated, and unsuited for the vocabulary of a universal and eternal religion. So be it; it matters not about the name (though it will always have its value for theology and the religious history of the world), the vital matter is what the name signifies. If Jesus can be the spiritual physician, and moral guide of mankind, He is what the people of Israel meant by a

Christ, one who satisfies the deepest needs and highest hopes of men. And so the great question is, Can the Jesus of the Gospels do this? The question is not to be settled by authority, or by apologetic evidences based on miracles and prophecies. Trust and moral admiration cannot be produced by such means. Orders to trust are futile, injunctions under pains and penalties to admire vain; proofs that a certain person ought to be trusted and admired inept, unless those to whom the commands and arguments are addressed perceive for themselves in the person commended the qualities that inspire trust and admiration. And if these qualities be there, the best thing one can do for his fellow-men is to let the object of faith and reverence speak for Himself. Hold up the picture and let men look at it. Set it in a good light, hang it well on the wall, remove from the canvas obscuring dust and cobwebs if such there be; then stand aside and let men gaze till the Friend of sinners, the Man of sorrow, the great Teacher, begins to reveal Himself to their souls.

Jesus has so revealed Himself to multitudes in all ages, and of all nationalities; He continues so to reveal Himself to-day. The success or non-success of His self-revelation has no connection with race, but only with moral affinity. Jesus came first to His own people, and for the most part they received him not. The result condemned not Him but them. They had a veil of religious prejudice on their face, and they could not see Him. It needs an open eye and an open heart to see Jesus truly. The open eye and open heart may be found in any quarter of the globe; sometimes in very

unlikely quarters: among Barbarians rather than in the great centres of culture and civilisation. The proud, the vain, the greedy, the slaves of fashion, however religious, know nothing about Jesus. Jesus was always on the outlook for the open eye and simple, open, honest heart, and He was greatly delighted when He found them. The classic example of this quest and delight is the story of the centurion of Capernaum, a Pagan, not a Jew, first-fruit of Gentile faith.[1] What beautiful, sublime simplicity in that Roman soldier's trust! And what a thrill of pleasure it gave Jesus! "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

Not in Israel, the very people for whose benefit the Messianic portrait was painted in the olden time. Strange that the same people should produce men capable of such splendid artistic work in the sphere of moral delineation, and be so lacking in the power of appreciating the historical realisation of the prophetic ideals. They devoutly, fanatically believed in the Messiah in the abstract, but could not recognise Him in the concrete. We have to thank Jewish blindness for the unearthing of this ancient prophetic picture by a Christian historian, by way of protest against hideous caricatures of Jesus by His religious contemporaries. We have to thank Jewish unbelief for the tragic result of these deplorable misunderstandings, the crucifixion. Faith in a Pagan soldier, unbelief in the most religious Jews. Faith where you did not look for it, unbelief where faith should have been. As it was then, so it is still, so probably it always will be. All turns on the

[1] *Matt.* viii. 5–13.

state of the heart. The pure heart, the unsophisticated conscience, is implicitly Christian everywhere. The men of impure heart, lacking in moral simplicity, may be very Christian in profession, fiercely on the side of Jesus, yet all the while they are really on the side of the Pharisees.

Wisdom, sympathy, modesty, gentleness, wide-heartedness, combined, such is the Evangelist's conception of the Christ, and of Jesus. Surely a most winsome Jesus and a most acceptable Messiah!

"Behold My servant, whom I uphold," so runs the oracle in the English version of the Hebrew original. Whom I *uphold:* Jehovah backs His servant, ideal Messianic Israel, however despised, against all comers. So may we Christians feel in reference to our Lord Jesus. We may well uphold Him; we may with good right hold up our heads as believers in Him, as men who support a good cause. Comparative religion teaches nothing to make us ashamed of Him. The only thing we have cause to be ashamed of is our miserably mean, inadequate presentation of Him in theory, and still more in life. Two things are urgently required of us modern Christians: to see Jesus truly and to show Him just as we see Him. "Behold My servant." Try hard to get a fresh sight of Jesus, to behold Him "with open face." Then what you have seen show with absolute sincerity, not hiding your light for fear of men who are religious but not Christian. Clear vision, heroic, uncalculating sincerity, how scarce in these days of time-serving! And what power goes with them! Give us a few men whose hearts have

been kindled with direct heaven-sent insight into the wisdom and grace of Christ, and who *must* speak what they know and testify what they have seen, and they will bring about a moral revolution, issuing in a Christianised Church and a righteous social state.

CHAPTER II

THE REALISTIC PICTURE OF MARK

THAT Mark is the earliest of the first three Gospels might be inferred from its comparative brevity, and also from the fact that it treats only of the public life of our Lord, giving no particulars concerning His birth such as we find in Matthew and Luke. But apart from these considerations this Gospel contains unmistakable internal marks of a relatively early date. These marks are such as suggest an eye and ear witness as the source of many narratives, and a narrator unembarrassed by reverence. This feeling, we know, does come into play in biographical delineations of men whose characters have become invested with sacredness, and its influence grows with time. The high esteem in which they are held more or less controls biographers, and begets a tendency to leave out humble facts, and tone down traits indicative of pronounced individuality, and so to construct a story smooth and commonplace in all that it reports of word or deed, and exhibiting a character free from all peculiarities over which the weakest might stumble, and just on that account possessing less interest for all who can discern and value originality and power. It may seem bold even to hint that any

such influence can be traced in any of the evangelic memoirs. It would be contrary to fact to say that any of them exhibit the characteristics of biographical writing arising out of the sense of decorum in a highly developed form, though calm investigation may constrain the admission that the rudiments of these are to be found in one of them. What I am concerned at present to point out is, that wherever such characteristics may be discovered in the Gospels, they have no place in Mark's narratives. If, as we have already seen, the presentation of Jesus in the first Gospel is influenced by prophecy going before, and if, as we shall see, the presentation of Jesus in the third Gospel is to a certain extent influenced by reverential faith coming after, it may be said with truth of the second that its picture of Jesus is not coloured by either of these influences.

Mark is the realist among the Evangelists. It has often been observed concerning his style that it is graphic, vivid, pictorial. The observation is not only not the whole truth, but it is even to some extent misleading. The epithet "pictorial" suggests the idea of an author who employs heightening phrases, and introduces unimportant particulars simply for effect. So used it is a doubtful compliment tending to lower rather than increase our respect for a writer. Now the thing to be noted about Mark is not the use of heightened or accumulated phrases so much as the avoidance of toning down, reticence, generalised expression, or euphemistic circumlocution. He states facts as they were, when one might be tempted not to state them at

all, or to show them in a subdued light. He describes from the life, while Matthew describes from the view-point of prophecy, and Luke from the view-point of faith. In this respect Mark occupies a place among the Gospels somewhat analogous to that of the Vatican codex,[1] which differs from all other ancient manuscript copies of the Greek New Testament by the measure in which it has kept free from modifications of the original due to regard for religious edification on the one hand, or to literary tastes on the other. The text of the Vatican codex has on this account been called "neutral," to distinguish it from the *paraphrasing* type of text current in the West, and from the *refining* type which had its source in Alexandria. Mark likewise may be called "neutral," not, indeed, in the sense in which the term has sometimes been applied to him, as implying a deliberate attitude of neutrality in reference to two conflicting theological tendencies,[2] but in the sense that he reproduces the story of Jesus from the life, uninfluenced to any appreciable extent either by the prophetic interest of the first Evangelist, or by the delicate sense of decorum characteristic of the third.

In this neutrality of Mark we have a guarantee of first-hand reports and early redaction not to be despised. The realism of the second Gospel makes for its historicity. It is the index of an *archaic* Gospel.

[1] Referred to in critical editions of the Greek New Testament by the letter B.

[2] Such was the view of Dr. Ferdinand Baur and other members of the famous Tübingen school.

Therefore we may have the less hesitation in making this feature prominent by going somewhat into detail. I have tried to make an apologetic point of the occasional weakness of Matthew's prophetic references; I hope now to make an additional point by the exhibition of Mark's realistic delineations.

1. I begin with a biographic hint found only in this Gospel concerning the private life of Jesus previous to the commencement of His public career. It is contained in the question of His fellow-townsmen on the occasion of His visit to Nazareth, after he had for some time carried on His work elsewhere: Is not this the *Carpenter?*[1] This is the one fact we learn from the second Evangelist concerning the history of Jesus previous to the eventful day when he left Nazareth for the scene of the Baptist's ministry. Mark, unlike his brother Evangelists, has no account of Jesus' birth, and no genealogy proving Him to be a lineal descendant of David. "A son of the hero-king of Israel," say Matthew and Luke; "a carpenter," says Mark, with somewhat disenchanting effect. And yet Mark's solitary realistic contribution to the early history of Jesus is perhaps of more importance to the permanent significance of Christianity than the other fact, which, while recognising it in his narratives, he takes no pains to verify. To make good the title "Son of David" as applicable to Jesus was an important function of the apologetic of the apostolic age, especially in a work like that of Matthew probably written for the benefit of Jewish Christians. But that title, in

[1] *Mark* vi. 3.

the literal or physical sense, can hardly be vital to the faith of Gentile believers and of all generations. Our faith that Jesus is the Christ does not depend on our being certain that He was physically descended from David. We may satisfy ourselves on independent grounds that He meets all our spiritual needs, and therefore is a true Christ for humanity. And when we have done this, we will have no difficulty in applying to Him the prophetic promise of a seed to David, at least in a spiritual sense, which in this case, as in the case of the Messianic *kingdom*, might conceivably be all the fulfilment the promise was to receive. "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed," argued St. Paul.[1] So we, following the same style of reasoning, may say: If Jesus be Christ (shown to be such by what He was and did), then was He David's seed, ideally at least, if not physically.

On the other hand, that Jesus, before He began His prophetic career, occupied the lowly state of a carpenter, is of universal, permanent, and, one may add, ever-increasing significance as a symbolic revelation of the genius of the Christian religion. It is by no means a merely outward, indifferent fact, too trivial for mention in even the fullest account of the life of so great a Personage. It has distinct and great ethical value, both as a biographical fact, and as a means of propagating Christian faith. How much that humble, yet not ignoble, occupation signifies as an element in the education of Jesus! What possibilities it provided of keen insight into the heart of human life, and

[1] *Gal.* iii. 29.

what protection it afforded against the unrealities and insincerities attaching to more favoured social conditions! Let us not rob it of its significance by remarking that to learn a trade was a fashion among Jews irrespective of rank. The artisan experience of Jesus was more than a fashion complied with; it was a social necessity endured. Jesus was a real, not an amateur, carpenter, the difference being as great as between a volunteer soldier and one who engages in actual fighting. Then what a power lies in this one fact, Jesus a carpenter, to enlist for Him the interest of the million! The toiling multitude in every land and in every age can say: He is one of ourselves. He knows us, and we know Him and trust Him. He fought a good fight for us, for man stripped of adventitious distinction; all honour to His name. It was well for all reasons that the Founder of a universal religion came up out of the humbler social levels with guaranteed sympathy for the many. And it is well that the fact has been distinctly stated in at least one Gospel, for "faith cometh by hearing."

2. Our next example of Mark's realism shall be taken from his account of "The Temptation." "The Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness."[1] Note the word *driveth*, much the strongest to be found in any of the accounts. It points to a powerful force at work, of some kind. And we can have no doubt as to its nature. Of course it was not a physical force exerted to compel a reluctant person to go whither he would not, into the inhospitable regions of a stony

[1] *Mark* i. 12.

desert, where "wild beasts" were the only available companions. The force of the Spirit, as the Evangelist conceives the matter, is brought to bear inwardly, and acts through thought and feeling. In other words, the driving implies and denotes *intense mental preoccupation*. Jesus is thinking earnestly, passionately, of His new vocation and of the future it will bring, and instinctively, inevitably, as if under an irresistible impulse, He retires into the solitudes of Nature congenial to one in so absorbed a mood. What a flash of light this one realistic word "driveth" throws on the spiritual endowment and disposition of Jesus! A deep thinker, with a profoundly earnest, passionate temper, and a spirit capable of single-hearted, consuming devotion to a great end: this is what we see by aid of this momentary illumination. And the knowledge we have gained is not confined to the particular experience to which the word is applied. It gives the key to the whole life in all its leading phases; therefore to those that already lie behind. It explains the departure from Nazareth, and the baptism in the Jordan. It helps us to understand why, and in what mood, Jesus left the home of His childhood and early youth, and the place and instruments of toil. The Spirit was driving Him then and there also; for we must on no account conceive the Spirit as coming upon Him for the first time after His baptism. The descent of the Spirit recorded by all the Evangelists is rather the objective symbol of an antecedent subjective fact, an inner possession reaching far back into the past years, and at last culminating in the

resolve to make that eventful journey southwards. The resolutions of deep, strong natures are not formed suddenly. They are the ripe fruit of early dreams, and lengthened brooding, and much wistful solitary thought. But when the crisis comes, purposes are formed with intense decision, and promptly carried into effect. Then the driving, tempestuous action of the spirit begins, when men called to great careers act in a way that surprises all who do not know what silent processes of preparation have gone before. So it was with Jesus when He left Nazareth; so when He demanded baptism; so when He retired into the wilderness. These were three consecutive scenes in the first act of the great drama which terminated on Calvary. Jesus passed through all three by Divine constraint. He *must* leave Nazareth, He *must* be baptised, He *must* bury Himself amid the grim retreats of the wilderness, to master there the abstruse problem of His new vocation, that He may enter on its duties with clear vision, confirmed will, and pure, devoted heart.

3. A third example of Mark's manner may be found in his account of the first appearance of Jesus in the synagogue of Capernaum.[1] Jesus now appears actually engaged in the work of His high calling, and that account gives a vivid idea of the impression He made immediately upon the people. He did two things on that occasion. He preached, and He cured a man suffering from a disease described as possession by an unclean spirit. By both functions He created astonishment, significantly reflected in the comments of those

[1] *Mark* i. 21.

present, as reproduced in the life-like report of the Evangelist. "What is this?" said they to each other, "What is this? A new teaching! With authority He commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."[1] They were astonished at the immediate cure of the demoniac by an authoritative word, and this is not surprising; but not at that alone. They were not less astonished at the novel kind of preaching, which ordinary readers of the Gospel, I suspect, fail sufficiently to realise. And yet the Evangelist does his best to direct our attention to the fact by an observation brought in at an earlier stage in his narrative.[2] In that observation he points out the remarkable feature in Christ's preaching. It was the note of authority, he explains, that took the hearers by surprise. Authority, commanding power in word and deed: that was what struck the worshippers in Jesus as He appeared before them that Sabbath day. And yet they had been accustomed to authority in doctrine. They were constantly hearing in the synagogue of what had been said by the ancients.[3] Their Rabbis or scribes were never done quoting the opinions of those who sat in Moses' seat, and interpreted the meaning of the law. But there was a wide difference between this new Rabbi and all the rest. The Evangelist remarks on it: "Not as the scribes," and we may take for granted that it had struck the people in the syna-

[1] *v.* 27, as in the Revised Version, which is based on a different reading in the Greek from that to which the Authorised Version corresponds, according to which the wonder referred only to the act of healing.

[2] *v.* 22. [3] *Matt.* v. 21.

gogue. Jesus spake not *by* authority, like the scribes, citing the names of renowned doctors, but *with* authority — "as one that had authority." He quoted no opinions of others; He simply uttered His own thoughts, and so uttered them that they came home to the minds of listeners with swift, sure effect, producing conviction, admiration, and sudden thrills of pleasure and awe. All this we learn from the simple words, "a new teaching!" reported by Mark as uttered on the spot. Peter was present. Papias, a Church Father, living about the beginning of the second century, tells us that that apostle was the source from whom Mark derived his information. It looks like it here. That lively exclamation: "a new teaching!" sounds like the report of one who had been there, and on whom the spontaneous expression of popular admiration had made an indelible impression.

4. A curious and at first puzzling instance of Mark's realism is supplied in his account of what may be called the *Flight of Jesus from Capernaum*. The story he tells is this: —

"And in the morning, a great while before day, He rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with Him followed after Him: and they found Him, and say unto Him, All are seeking Thee. And He saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also, for to this end came I forth."[1]

"To this end came I forth," *i.e.*, from Capernaum early that morning. Luke gives the matter a different turn. He makes no mention of a flight at an early

[1] *Mark* i. 35–38, from the Revised Version.

hour, and he changes the apology for flight into a statement by Jesus as to the aim of His mission in general.[1] We must not, in the well-meaning but somewhat officious spirit of the harmonists, force the second Evangelist to say the same thing as the third.

Mark's version is historical, not theological; and if we will take it so, we shall get clearer insight into the spirit of Jesus, and the situation in which He was then placed. We assume then that what Jesus said to Peter and the others was that He had left Capernaum in order that He might preach in other towns. From this we learn that Jesus had formed a plan for a preaching tour in Galilee, and that the appearance in the synagogue of Capernaum on the previous day was simply the beginning of its execution. Having delivered His message there, He desires to visit other Galilean synagogues, that He may speak in them words of similar import. That we now fully understand to be His earnest, deliberate purpose. But why such haste, and why such secrecy? Why not stay a little longer in Capernaum, where His words and works are so greatly appreciated, say another week; and why not leave, when He does leave, in open day? There must be urgent reasons for the haste and the secrecy. The reason for the *secrecy* is obvious. All were seeking Him. The people of Capernaum had not had enough of Him, either of His preaching or of His healing power, and they would do their utmost to prevent His going; therefore He stole away while they were asleep. But what was the reason of the

[1] *Luke* iv. 42, 43.

haste? It must be found in that which constitutes the penalty of sudden and great popularity — the jealousy, envy, and ill-will of those whose vanity or interest is compromised thereby. Jesus taught not as the *scribes*. The scribes knew that as well as the people, and even if no comparisons were made by other hearers, they themselves, such of them as were in the audience, would carefully note the difference, and find in it a source of annoyance. Jesus instinctively apprehended danger, and took His measures accordingly. Being earnestly minded to preach in other synagogues, He hasted away, fearing that His opportunity might soon be cut off. He could not speak in the synagogues without the consent of the officials, and who could tell how soon and how far the incipient dislike of the scribes in Capernaum might spread, proving a barrier in His way wherever He went. Therefore He said to Himself: "I must go at once on this preaching mission, that I may speak in as many synagogues as possible, before there has been time for opposition to be organised."

Here was a complicated, perplexing situation: immense popularity on the one hand; ill-will in the professional heart, likely ere long to develop into overt action, on the other. We are not surprised to learn that Jesus spent part of that morning in prayer. He did not pray as a matter of course in pursuance of a habit, engaging as it were in His wonted morning devotions. The prayer was special, in reference to an urgent occasion; and though no particulars are mentioned, we can easily imagine its purport. The

emergency suggested petitions such as these: that the people in the various places He meant to visit might lend Him a willing ear; that opportunity might not be too soon cut off by the plotting of evil-minded men; that He might be able to speak the word of the kingdom sweetly and graciously, unruffled in spirit by opposition experienced or apprehended; that impressions made on friendly hearers might not run into a merely superficial enthusiasm, or degenerate into an interest having its root in a desire for material benefit. How luminous and instructive that puzzling realistic anecdote of Mark's has at length grown!

5. Our next instance is the remarkable statement peculiar to the second Gospel that the relatives of Jesus at a certain period said of Him: "He is beside Himself."[1] The passage is somewhat obscure partly owing to its brevity, and as a Catholic commentator long ago remarked,[2] it is rendered more difficult than it really is by a piety that will not let itself believe that any one could think of Jesus as seems to be reported. But it is best to look the unpleasant fact fairly in the face in hope that it will bring to view some new and notable features in the picture of Jesus.

One thing the fact stated very evidently bears witness to: the moral originality of Jesus. The thought of His relatives simply exemplifies the incapacity of the ordinary man to understand the extraordinary man. Unusual force of mind, or depth of conviction or sincerity in utterance, anything out of the common

[1] *Mark* iii. 21. [2] Maldonatus.

course in conception or in conduct, is a mystery or even an offence to the average man. It would be his wisdom to stand in silent awe, hat in hand so to speak, before the mystery, as unscientific persons would stand in the presence of a mysterious phenomenon in the physical universe. But men will talk about their moral superiors, they will have their opinions and theories about them, and they have little hesitation in uttering these, however disrespectful or injurious. And so it came to pass that even the friends of Jesus thought and said that He was out of His senses, thereby bearing involuntary testimony to the exceptional greatness of His personality.

The rude speech of these stupid friends testifies further to the enthusiasm of Christ's humanity. It was while He was so busily occupied with His usual work among the people, preaching and healing, that He could not find time to take food that the friends arrived on the scene, and, watching His behaviour, came to their sapient conclusion. Much benevolence, they thought, had made Him mad, and in their goodness they desired to rescue Him from the crowd and the excitement, and take Him home to quietness and rest. Let us pardon their stupidity for the sake of their most reliable testimony to the intensity of Christ's devotion to His beneficent toil. The madness was only in their imagination, but the benevolence was a great indubitable fact. Here also He was driven by the Spirit. A sacred passion for doing good to others was one of the outstanding characteristics of Jesus; that is what we learn in an emphatic

manner from this new instance of Mark's blunt way of telling his story.

From this same instance we may learn further the extensive and extraordinary character of the healing ministry of Jesus. It was so obtrusive a fact that men found it necessary to invent theories to account for it. The friends of Jesus had their theory; looking on while He taught and healed, they said to one another, He is suffering from a disordered mind. Theirs was not the only theory broached; King Herod had his likewise. When he heard of the fame of Jesus as a Healer, he said: It is John the Baptist risen from the dead — just come back to earth from the spirit-world and wielding its mysterious powers.[1] And the scribes and Pharisees had their theory, especially with reference to the cure of demoniacs; Mark places it side by side with that of the friends as if inviting us to compare the two. He casteth out devils, said they, by the prince of devils.[2] Very unsatisfactory theories all three; the first stupid, the second grotesque, the third malicious and dishonest. Never mind. They all serve an important purpose, that of showing that the healing ministry was a great fact. Men do not theorise about nothing. When theories arise, something has occurred that arrests attention and demands explanation.

Before passing from this instance it is due to Mark to say that he has supplied materials which enable us to see how utterly unfounded was the judgment of the "friends." It is not to be denied that incessant ex-

[1] *Mark* vi. 14. [2] *Mark* iii. 22.

citing work among the "masses," especially such as makes heavy demands on sympathy, brings dangers both to bodily and to mental health. There is need not only for intervals of rest, but for occupations and interests of a different order to help the mind to maintain its balance, and to keep the spirit in perpetual calm. That these were not wanting in the case of Jesus clearly appears in Mark's narrative. Just before he has shown Jesus occupied with the formation of a *disciple-circle*, first selecting from the great crowd a larger group of susceptible spirits with whom He retires to the mountain top, and thereafter by a gradual process choosing from these a smaller circle of twelve.[1] With these chosen companions He remains up there for some time communicating to them such deep wise thoughts as those preserved in Matthew's *Sermon on the Mount.* This might be made clearer to the ordinary reader by a different verse-division and a slightly amended translation, the words "And He cometh into a house"[2] being made an independent verse, and the phrase "into a house" being replaced by the one word "home." The narrative will then stand thus, —

v. 19, "And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him" (the close of the disciple-list).

v. 20, "And He cometh home."

v. 21, "And the multitude cometh together again so that they could not so much as eat bread."

By leaving a blank space between *v.* 19 and *v.* 20 we convey the impression of a considerable interval

[1] *Mark* iii. 13, 14. [2] *Mark* iii. 19.

between the ascent of the mountain (*v.* 13) and the return to the plain, or the coming *home*, which of itself implies absence for an appreciable time. The blank is the place at which Mark's report of the Teaching on the Hill would have come in had it entered into his plan to record it.

6. Yet another instance of Mark's realistic style must be briefly noticed. It is the tableau of Jesus on the way to Jerusalem, and the final crisis, presented in these words: —

"And they were in the way, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them, and they were amazed, and they that followed were afraid."[1]

Again the same intensity which had filled "friends" with astonishment and alarm. Once more, driven by the Spirit! But this time the subject which engrosses the thoughts of Jesus is not His beneficent work among the people but his own approaching passion. Walking in advance of the twelve and the larger crowd who followed in the rear, He is as solitary in spirit as He is isolated on the ascending path. Emotions agitate His soul in which His fellow-travellers have no part. The inward mood reveals itself in His outward bearing in such a way as to inspire in spectators wonder and fear. How much was in his mind at that hour: the holy supper, the farewell words, Gethsemane, the cross, all there by vivid anticipation! And how much in His manner as it met the eye: a tragic mood, a hero's air, the step of one going forward to battle! He told the twelve

[1] *Mark* x. 32.

what He was thinking of, but it was not necessary; they saw it all and were filled with awe. And we see it through the Evangelist's vivid, rapid portraiture, in which gesture is made to tell the tale of unspeakable pathos, firm resolve, heroic daring, faithfulness even unto death.

The foregoing are samples of realistic touches peculiar to Mark, and their number might easily be increased. There are others equally significant in which he does not stand alone, Matthew having introduced them into his narrative probably from the pages of his brother Evangelist. Among these may be named the realistic description of the process of digestion in the discourse concerning that which defileth,[1] the discouraging word to the Syrophenician woman, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs,[2] and the stern word to Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan,[3] all omitted by Luke, to which may be added in the sphere of action the realistic description of the cleansing of the temple.[4] If any one desires to know what is meant by realism, let him compare with Mark's account of that transaction the mild, mitigated report of it given by the third Evangelist. I content myself with a bare reference to these instances, and close with an illustration of Mark's manner taken from the sphere of *doctrine*.

7. Mark's account of the teaching of our Lord is, by comparison with that in the other Gospels, very meagre. Yet it is remarkable that two of the most

[1] *Mark* vii. 19.
[2] *Mark* vii. 27.
[3] *Mark* viii. 33.
[4] *Mark* xi. 15–18.

characteristic utterances of Jesus have been preserved by him alone. These are the saying concerning the Sabbath being made for man,[1] and the parable of the *Blade*, the *Green Ear*, and the *Ripe Corn*.[2] The former admirably illustrates the comment on Christ's manner of teaching, "not as the scribes." The saying, the Sabbath exists for man not man for the Sabbath, is diametrically opposed to the scribal method of teaching in religious tendency and spirit. In effect their doctrine was precisely that man existed for the Sabbath. Originally given, as Jesus hinted in the first part of His saying, for man's benefit, as a resting day for weary men, a day of emancipation from toil and drudgery, they had converted it into a day taken from man by God in an exacting spirit, and so established in connection with it a new form of bondage — slavish subjection to an institution. A boon turned into a tyranny — such was the Sabbath as enforced by the scribes; a tyranny restored to a boon — such it became through the redemptive word of Jesus. That word was equally opposed to the scribal method of teaching in manner. No authorities cited, no Rabbi referred to as the first to utter so bold a thought. Jesus speaks in His own name, and on His own authority; a grave word on a vital question, incisive, decisive, final. Once more that word presents a complete contrast to the teaching of the scribes in its ethical character. The scribal mind moved within the region of positive rules, the more minute and unreasonable the better; the thoughts of Jesus spurned these nar-

[1] *Mark* ii. 27. [2] *Mark* iv. 26–29.

row limits, and were conversant with great moral principles and ultimate truths in religion. No better voucher for this statement could be offered than the saying in which He stated the true relation between the Sabbath and man.

Equally remarkable is the parable of the Blade, the Green Ear, and the Ripe Corn. It states in distinct terms the law of growth or gradual development as a law obtaining in the spiritual world not less than in the natural. It is the most precise, indeed I may say the only precise, enunciation of that law, as reigning in the spiritual sphere, to be found in the New Testament. Some have doubted the genuineness of the parable, regarding it as a secondary form of some other parabolic utterance of Jesus. Surely a groundless doubt! Who but Jesus could have spoken so felicitous and so philosophical a word? Not one man known to us in the apostolic age, not even the Apostle Paul. Indeed so far is the great Master above the attainments of the primitive Church in this part of His teaching that one is thankful the parable has been preserved at all, even in a single Gospel. The same remark applies to the saying concerning the Sabbath. Both utterances were, if I may say so, too deep and too thorough-going for the comprehension and sympathies of average disciples. And it is just on this account that I think they may legitimately be used to illustrate the *realism* of Mark. He reports, as they were spoken, these striking words, when the temptation was either to omit or to qualify. He did this doubtless on the authority of one who heard them as they

fell from the lips of the Master, and who, though he might not understand or fully appreciate, could never forget.

These two invaluable words are a welcome contribution in a Gospel in which Jesus appears chiefly as an energetic original actor. They show that the force of His intellect was equal to the force of His will. They also prove that the impassioned temperament was balanced by a deep imperturbable tranquillity of spirit; for such great, universal, eternal thoughts visit only minds blessed with perennial repose.

CHAPTER III

THE IDEALISED PICTURE OF LUKE

LUKE is the only one of the synoptical[1] Evangelists who takes his readers into his confidence as to the aim and plan which guided him in writing his Gospel. From the statement which he makes in the opening sentence of his work, the following inferences may be drawn:

1. That he lived late in the day, after many attempts had already been made to give an account more or less complete of the public ministry of Jesus.

2. That he had not himself been an eye-witness of any part of that ministry, or even had an opportunity of hearing particulars concerning it from any of the men who "had been with Jesus."

3. That his sources of information were mainly books, written accounts, memoirs of the life of Jesus.

4. That in writing his Gospel he earnestly endeavoured to make a careful, judicious use of these sources.

5. That his aim in writing was to confirm faith in the evangelic tradition in the mind of the friend whose

[1] This term is applied to the first three Gospels to denote that they are so like one another in contents and style that they may and ought to be studied together.

benefit he had chiefly in view: in his own words, "that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed."

Luke, we see, had the spirit of research, and desired to base his narrative on the sure ground of historic fact.

It is quite compatible with this that the Evangelist should be to a certain extent controlled in the construction of his story by his own religious feelings, or by the religious feelings of the time in which he lived, or by the spiritual state of his first readers, whether we include in that category merely the one person named, Theophilus, or a circle in which he was the prominent figure. He might have to consider what they were likely to be interested in, what they could understand, what they could bear, and his own tastes and sympathies might be very much like theirs.

Compared with the first two Gospels, the third presents characteristics which answer to this hypothetical state of matters. A large number of particulars can be collected from its pages which, taken together, convey the impression of a story told under the influence of certain preconceived ideas or predilections. They are too many to be accidental, and too marked to be the result of the unconscious action of the stream of tradition rolling evangelic incidents down its course, and polishing them into smoothness as it carried them along. One cannot help feeling that there must have been intention at work, at some point, either in our Evangelist, or in those who prepared the sources from which he drew his information.

The features of the narrative which most plainly bear traces of editorial discretion with a view to edification relate to the person and character of our Lord and also of His apostles. The writer seems never to forget the present position of those of whom he has occasion to speak, as the Risen Lord of the Church, and its earthly Heads. The frequent use of the title "Lord" and "Apostles" where the other two Evangelists say "Jesus," and "Disciples" at once exemplifies and symbolises the reverential attitude. To that attitude it is probably further due that some things related in Matthew and Mark are omitted, some things strongly emphasised, some things set in a subdued light, and, finally, some things introduced for the first time into the evangelic story: all making for one end, giving prominence to certain aspects of the Saviour's career and character that strongly appeal to faith and love, and throwing into the shade others making severer demands on the power of appreciation. In the sections of the narrative relating to the disciples the apparent tendency is to gentle handling of their weaknesses, while letting it be seen that the weaknesses were there.

It is in view of such characteristics as those above referred to that I apply the epithet "idealised" to the picture of Jesus presented in the Third Gospel. The term needs to be guarded against possible misapprehension. It might suggest the idea of a narrative dominated by a theological idea, or by a controversial tendency, say a keen interest in a universal, Gentile, Pauline Christianity. Such a bias has indeed been

ascribed to Luke, but dispassionate investigation finds little trace of it. The Evangelist is doubtless Pauline and universalist in his attitude, and it gives him pleasure to record words and acts of Jesus going to prove that He had the Gentiles in view as ultimate participants in the blessings of His gospel. But his interest in such elements of the evangelic tradition is religious, not controversial, and even as such it is by no means keen, absorbing, predominant. If he had been a controversial Paulinist, as imagined by the famous Tübingen school, he would have taken pains to let the Twelve appear in as unfavourable a light as possible, whereas the fact is he "ever spares" them. If he had been a keen universalist, he would have reported certain words of our Lord pointing in that direction, given both in Matthew and in Mark, which he nevertheless omits.[1] When therefore the picture of Jesus given by Luke is described as "idealised," the meaning is that his presentation is dominated, not by theological ideas or controversial tendency, but by religious sentiment having its root either in the personal idiosyncrasy of the writer, or in considerate regard to the edification of his first readers.

The character of Christ had heights and depths fitted to test severely the powers of comprehension not merely of crude disciples, but even of experienced, mature Apostles and Evangelists. Two ways of dealing with the harder sayings and doings are conceivable. An Evangelist might relate all he knew as it happened,

[1] *E.g.*, the remarkable word in *Matthew* xxvi. 13, *Mark* xiv. 9: "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in all the world," etc.

and leave his story to make its own impression, loyally trusting that the character described, even though it should be in some respects above his own comprehension, would eventually in its every feature commend itself to the minds and consciences of all believers. Or he might, so to speak, take the character of Jesus in charge, and allow nothing to appear which was "over the head" of the reporter, or which he feared might prove a stumbling-block to those whose religious benefit he had primarily in view in writing. Which of these two ways of discharging the Evangelist's very responsible function is the wiser, it is needless to discuss; perhaps both are justifiable in given circumstances. Anyhow, the fact is that Mark (and Matthew also) has chosen the former way, and Luke, so far as one can judge, the latter. At all events, the phenomena of his Gospel are such as fit into that hypothesis. There are many facts bearing that complexion, however they are to be explained. I shall exhibit them with some measure of fulness, believing that in this case also a fearless discussion will be found to make for the historicity of the evangelic tradition. And for the more complete inductive verification of Luke's method, I shall briefly note also some instances of his discreet manner of dealing with materials relating to the disciples, though not they, but their Master be our theme. It may be best to dispose of these first.

Luke, it has been said by a very reverent commentator,[1] "ever spares the Twelve." As a matter of fact his narratives, compared with those of Matthew and

[1] Schanz, a Catholic professor in Tübingen.

Mark, uniformly treat the disciples with considerate gentleness. How true this is, cannot be adequately shown by a cursory reference to illustrative instances; the passages must be carefully perused and compared with the parallels in the other Gospels. Yet even the hastiest glance will suffice to make a *primâ facie* impression in the direction of our thesis.

Take then, to begin with, the treatment of *Peter*. The stern word, "Get thee behind me, Satan," is omitted. But most characteristic is the manner in which the most humiliating event in Peter's disciple life, his denial of his Lord, is dealt with. The pre-intimation of the coming fall is most gently handled. The harshness of the announcement, "thou shalt deny me thrice," is softened by a prefatory statement, in which by an allusion to Satan Peter's case is virtually placed beside that of Job, and the experience is likened to a sifting process whereby a saintly character will be purged of its weak, chaff-like elements, the result of all to be that the sifted man shall become the strongest man of the apostolic band, having it for his honourable vocation to succour weaker brethren.[1] And what a benignant under-statement is the account of the denial! No mention of cursing and swearing. The three denials form an anti-climax, each succeeding one weaker than the one going before. In the first, Peter denies all knowledge of Jesus; in the second, only *intimate* knowledge, *discipleship;* and the last, occurring an hour later than the one preceding, is rather an *evasion* than a denial:

[1] *Luke* xxii. 31, 32.

A Galilean, say you? Yes, I am, and I don't understand what you are saying.[1]

The whole body of the Twelve are treated with equal consideration. Their faults — ignorance, weak faith, mutual rivalries — while acknowledged in loyalty to truth, are touched with a very sparing hand. Some narratives in which these appear in a glaring manner are conspicuous by their absence. To the omitted incidents belong the conversation concerning the leaven of the Pharisees, in which, as Mark reports it, Jesus complains of the hardness of their hearts, and asks reproachfully, Do not ye yet understand?[2] the ambitious request of the two sons of Zebedee, in which the discord within the disciple-circle appears in its most acute form,[3] and the anointing in Bethany, in which the Twelve show a prosaic incapacity to appreciate the pathetic, poetic deed of Mary.[4] To be noted also in this connection is Luke's silence concerning the flight of the disciples at the apprehension of their Master. Even more instructive than this silence is the mild, delicate way in which the faults of the future Apostles are dealt with by the Evangelist when he is compelled to speak of them. Take, *e.g.*, their weak faith. In the storm on the lake, on the eastward voyage towards Gerasa, as reported by Matthew and Mark, Jesus characterises the behaviour of His disciples as cowardly, and as exhibiting a lack

[1] *Luke* xxii. 55–62; compare with *Mark* xiv. 66–72.

[2] *Mark* viii. 11–21; for another strong reflection on the ignorance of the disciples, *vide* chap. vii. 18.

[3] *Mark* x. 35–45; *Matt.* xx. 20–28.

[4] *Mark* xiv. 3–9; *Matt.* xxvi. 6–13.

of faith.[1] In Luke's report, with just the slightest accent of reproach in His tone, He asks, "Where is your faith?"[2] Again, at the foot of the hill of Transfiguration, the disciples, in Matthew, ask, Why could not we cast it out? and receive for reply, Because of your little faith; the Master going on to indicate what mighty deeds could be wrought by the smallest grain of faith, as if to insinuate that they had none at all.[3] This conversation, connected with the case of the epileptic boy, Luke omits. The saying concerning faith as a grain of mustard seed he does report, but in a characteristically different setting. The Apostles say unto their Lord, Increase our faith; and He replies, "If (as is the case) ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou rooted up and be thou planted in the sea, and it would have obeyed you,"[4] the implied assertion being that they have already enough to achieve marvels. Note again how the Evangelist disposes of the rivalry among the companions of Jesus. He selects as the place for mentioning it the story of the Last Supper on the eve of the Passion. Truly a most unseemly time for disciples to indulge in ambitious passions! How then is the outbreak dealt with? Jesus first utters the words of admonition which, according to Matthew and Mark, He spoke on the occasion when James and John made their ambitious request. Then He goes on immediately after to pronounce a generous eulogy on the contending disciples: "Ye are they

[1] *Matt.* viii. 26; *Mark* iv. 40.
[2] *Luke* viii. 25.
[3] *Matt.* xvii. 19, 20.
[4] *Luke* xvii. 5, 6.

which have continued with Me in My temptations";[1] so, as it were, dwarfing into insignificance the petty fault of temper in comparison with the heroic fidelity. Just one point more I barely mention here: Luke's apology for the failure of the disciples to keep awake when their Master was in Gethsemane. "Sleeping *for sorrow!*"[2] Doubtless the fact was so, but he is careful to note it. How true it is that he ever spares the Twelve!

But it is with Luke's portraiture of our Lord that we are mainly concerned; I proceed, therefore, to indicate some of the things in his Gospel which lend distinctiveness to his picture.

1. Among these fall to be mentioned some notable *omissions*, more especially some of the more remarkable words reported by the other Evangelists as having been spoken by Jesus. Some have been referred to already in a previous chapter, such as the realistic word concerning that which defileth,[3] the seemingly harsh word about "dogs" spoken to the woman of Canaan,[4] and the stern rebuke administered to Peter: "Get thee behind me, Satan." Another very noticeable omission is the saying concerning *eunuchism* for the Kingdom of Heaven, for which we are indebted to Matthew.[5] Still more remarkable is the omission of the awful cry of Jesus on the cross: "My God, My God!"[6] In some respects the most surprising omission of all is the very important word spoken by

[1] *Luke* xxii. 28.
[2] *Luke* xxii. 45.
[3] *Matt.* xv. 17, 18; *Mark* vii. 18, 19.
[4] *Matt.* xv. 26; *Mark* vii. 27.
[5] *Matt.* xix. 12.
[6] *Matt.* xxvii. 46; *Mark* xv. 34.

Jesus on the occasion of the ambitious request of James and John: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."[1] What gives this omission special claims on our attention is the fact that it seems on first view one of those words which, assuming his acquaintance with it, Luke would have taken pains to preserve. Its omission is a problem to be solved in connection with his Gospel. But this is only a part of the problem. This particular saying is one of four containing Christ's teaching concerning the significance of His death, *all* of which, with one very doubtful exception, are wanting in the Third Gospel. This is a fact the reason and meaning of which deserve careful consideration, and they will be considered in a future chapter.[2] Meantime I simply note this as one of the peculiarities of Luke, and pass on to a second class of phenomena which make this Evangelist's picture of Jesus so distinctive.

2. The things which are strongly *emphasised*. First, let it be remarked in general that there *are* such phenomena in the Third Gospel. Luke does not always tone down and deal in mitigated statements. He can be as emphatic and realistic as either of his brother Evangelists when it suits his purpose, and this very occasional emphasis gives added significance to the opposite quality of subdued expression observable in some of his narratives. Among the instances in which he does not shrink from strong sayings are his reports of words spoken by our Lord in reference to wealth

[1] *Matt.* xx. 28; *Mark* x. 45. [2] *Vide* chap. xii.

and its possessors. The hard saying concerning the camel and the needle's eye finds a place in his pages.[1] It is in his Gospel we find the woes pronounced on the rich, the full, and the merry.[2] In the parables of the *Unjust Steward* and *Dives*[3] riches almost seem to be in themselves evil, and the bare fact of possessing them appears to be represented as a ground of perdition. It may be only an appearance, but it is there, requiring explanation; and the thing to be noted is that the Evangelist takes no pains in this case to prevent misapprehension. The fact may be due in part to the nature of his own social sympathies, partly to his knowing that there was no risk of any of his readers stumbling over such sayings of the Lord.

Luke emphasises whatever tends to bring out into strong relief the *power*, the *benevolence*, and the *saintliness* of Jesus. His desire to make prominent the two former of these attributes is apparent in his narratives of healing acts. Peter's mother-in-law is ill of a *great* fever,[4] and the leper is *full* of leprosy,[5] and in the story of the blind man at Jericho care is taken to make it appear a case of *total* blindness by representing the sufferer as needing some one to conduct him to the presence of Jesus.[6] There is no good ground for regarding these statements as exaggerations, but it is legitimate to see in them a wish to make the cure effected stand out in the full measure of its marvellousness. The greatness of the benefit conferred, that is the benevo-

[1] *Luke* xviii. 24.
[2] *Luke* vi. 24, 25.
[3] *Luke* xvi.
[4] *Luke* iv. 38.
[5] *Luke* v. 12.
[6] *Luke* xviii. 40.

lence of the Healer, is also rendered prominent by many a slight but significant touch. The withered hand restored on a Sabbath is the *right*[1] hand, most useful for labour; the centurion's servant is one *dear* to him;[2] the son of the widow of Nain is an *only* son,[3] and the daughter of Jairus an *only* daughter;[4] the epileptic boy at the foot of the hill of Transfiguration is also an only child.[5]

The *holiness* of the Lord Jesus is carefully accentuated in this Gospel. The call of Peter to discipleship, which here assumes larger proportions and greater significance than it possesses in Matthew and Mark, is made to contribute to this end. Here Peter is the great disciple, the representative man among the Twelve, therefore his call is related with much circumstantiality, while that of the others, James, John, and Andrew, is thrown into the shade. Yet even he, the pillar-Apostle of future years, in view of the marvellous take of fishes, exclaims, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The foremost of the disciples feels himself unworthy to join the society of the Holy One.[6]

In every saintly character *prayer*, a devotional spirit, forms a prominent feature. This trait in the character of the Lord Jesus is accordingly made very prominent in Luke's Gospel. After the healing of the leper Jesus withdraws into lonely spots to pray.[7] The teaching on the hill is inaugurated by a night spent in prayer.[8]

[1] *Luke* vi. 6. [2] *Luke* vii. 2. [3] *Luke* vii. 12.
[4] *Luke* viii. 42. [5] *Luke* ix. 38. [6] *Luke* v. 8.
[7] *Luke* v. 16. [8] *Luke* vi. 12.

Prayer formed the prelude to the momentous communications on the Messiahship and the approaching Passion;[1] likewise to the mysterious Transfiguration scene.[2] Sometimes the Master prayed alone, sometimes in the presence of His disciples. Hearing Him pray in a certain place awoke in them a desire for instruction in an art in which they felt the Master left them far behind.[3] He prayed *for* them as well as in their hearing; for Peter, for example, when the hour of his trial was nigh.[4]

3. I pass now to the category of *under-statement*, things presented in a subdued light. Both words and acts of Jesus fall to be noticed here. To the former belong the words spoken at Capernaum in reference to the discussion that had arisen within the disciple-circle on the question: Who is the greatest? According to the report of Matthew, the Master then spoke two very stern words, one directly addressed to the disciples, the other bearing on the doom due to the man who, in the pursuit of ambitious ends, should cause any little one to stumble. In the former disciples are threatened with exclusion from the kingdom unless their disposition undergo a change, and ambitious passions give place to a childlike spirit. In the latter it is intimated that the fate deserved by the offender of the little ones is that a large millstone (literally one driven by an ass, as opposed to a small one worked by the hand) be hanged about his neck, and that he be drowned in the deepest part of the sea.[5] Words, both, expressive of passionate

[1] *Luke* ix. 18. [2] *Luke* ix. 29. [3] *Luke* xi. 1.
[4] *Luke* xxii. 32. [5] *Matt.* xviii. 3, 6.

abhorrence of selfish ambition and the mischief it works, by the utterance of which Jesus commands our admiration and inspires in our hearts holy awe. But Luke has dealt with these solemn sayings in a way which prevents them from having their full effect, toning down the millstone saying so that it loses its note of indignant intensity,[1] and transferring the other to a different occasion, where it loses the personal reference to the disciples, and becomes a general declaration as to the necessity of childlikeness for admission into the Kingdom of Heaven. The new setting is furnished by the incident of the mothers bringing their little children to be blessed by Jesus,[2] which, I may remark in passing, supplies a fresh instance of Luke's habit of sparing the Twelve. Mark tells that Jesus was much displeased with His disciples for trying to keep the children from His presence.[3] Of this the third Evangelist says nothing. The omission has the same effect as the toning down of the words under consideration. Both keep the *indignation* of Jesus out of view, and suggest the idea of one who was always calm in temper and passionlessly didactic in speech. Whether this passionlessness entered into the Evangelist's own idea of sanctity, or whether in so reporting the Lord's words he was considering what his readers could bear, it may be difficult to determine. What is certain is

[1] *Luke* xvii. 2: The ass-millstone becomes a millstone simply, and "the sea" stands in place of "the depth of the sea." Luke gives neither of the sayings in connection with the Capernaum discourse on humility. *Vide* chap. ix. 46–48.

[2] *Luke* xviii. 15–17.

[3] *Mark* x. 14.

that the character of Jesus thus portrayed gains in amiability at the cost of its power and majesty.

A similar observation is suggested by Luke's treatment of our Lord's anti-Pharisaic protest. Two facts have to be noticed here: extensive omission, and a new setting given to much that is retained. As to the former, so much has been left out that from Luke's Gospel alone it would be quite impossible to obtain any adequate idea of the viciousness of Pharisaic religion, or of the thoroughness and exhaustiveness of the criticism which Jesus directed against it. In proof of this statement it will suffice to mention the omission of the great body of the Sermon on the Mount, consisting of an elaborate contrast between righteousness as conceived by the scribes and the righteousness of the kingdom as conceived by the Preacher, and also of one-half of the great final philippic against Pharisaism as recorded in Matthew xxiii. But it is the setting of what is retained that at present concerns us. It strikes me as most characteristic and instructive. The fact here is that much of what Luke reports of our Lord's anti-Pharisaic discourses appears in his Gospel as spoken not merely *about* Pharisees but *to* them by Jesus sitting as a guest at their tables. On three distinct occasions Jesus appears in his pages as a guest in the houses of Pharisees, and speaks His mind about their ways with urbanity though also with freedom.[1] Of such semi-friendly social relations there is no trace in Matthew and Mark, and we might easily take away from their narratives the impression that such relations

[1] *Luke* vii. 36–50, xi. 37–52, xiv. 1–24.

were impossible. That might be a hasty inference. It may be taken for granted that Jesus would not refuse such invitations, and that He would be true to Himself wherever He was. On the other hand, it is equally certain that His attitude towards Pharisaism was uncompromising, and His speech about it, especially at the end, crushing and tremendous. And the thing to be noted about Luke is that he mitigates the severity of the sterner utterances by giving as table-talk what in Matthew's Gospel appears as part of a solemn final protest in Jerusalem against the religious guides of Israel and all their ways.[1]

The chief instances of pruned statement concerning the *actions* of Jesus are the narratives of the Cleansing of the Temple and the Agony in the Garden. The latter will fall to be considered at a later stage of these studies; therefore for the present I content myself with a few words on the former. Of the three synoptical Evangelists, Mark describes the scene in the strongest colours, but both Matthew and he tell the story in substantially the same way. In both Jesus not merely speaks in a tone of indignant remonstrance, but acts with a stormy energy that might easily be mistaken for violence, overturning the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold the doves. He makes a clean sweep of the unholy traffic within the sacred precincts, unceremoniously turning out not merely those that sold but also those that bought as art and part in the work of desecration. Of this animated transaction, Luke offers a very reduced and unsensational account,

[1] *Vide* in chap. xi. 37 ff.

telling how Jesus, entering the temple, began to cast out them that *sold*, making no mention of the overturned tables and seats, adding only the complaint: It is written, And My house shall be a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of robbers.[1] His report gives really no idea of the scene; the one vivid feature is the comparison of the desecrated temple to a robber's den. And yet from that strong utterance one might suspect that there was something behind left unsaid. It seems to be a half-told tale, as if adapted to the capacities of spiritual minors, who would find it difficult to reconcile the strenuous conduct of Jesus with their preconceived ideas of His character. Probably what interested Luke himself was not the drastic action of the Lord Jesus, but the verdict He pronounced on the Holy House as no longer holy, justifying beforehand that still more drastic action of Providence by which the temple, at the time he wrote, had been turned into a heap of ruins. Whatever the reason, the fact is that in this case, as in others, the third Evangelist presents a picture of Jesus which lacks the element of *tragic grandeur*.

4. For this defect Luke amply compensates by the attractive exhibition which he makes of the *grace* of Jesus, especially in the *additions* he contributes to the common stock of evangelic traditions.

Luke's additions, though not exclusively, are predominantly, such as serve this valuable purpose. They

[1] *Luke* xix. 45, 46: the words "them that bought" have no place in the best MS. copies of the Greek Testament, and are omitted in the Revised Version.

may for the most part be described by the happy phrase he employs to indicate the character of Christ's address in the synagogue of Nazareth: "words of grace."[1] He had evidently taken pains to collect material of this kind. There is no reason to doubt the historicity of his collections. The statement in his preface justifies the assumption that for every one of his narratives he had a voucher in oral or in written tradition. Then there is intrinsic probability on the side of his peculiar contributions. Love to the sinful and the social outcasts was unquestionably a most outstanding charism of Jesus. Most authentic sayings of His, such as "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners," and "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost," entitle us to look for illustrative anecdotes in the memorabilia of His public ministry. Instead of questioning the truth of those Luke has preserved, we rather wonder at the paucity of such material in the companion Gospels. We feel sure that interesting stories of the relations of Jesus with the sinful, and of His sayings about them, might be forthcoming, if pains were taken to collect them. Luke happily has taken pains, possibly in part because he noticed a lack in Matthew or in Mark, and felt he must set himself to supply it. What he has given by way of supplement is very welcome as well as very credible. The story of the woman in Simon's house[2] is pure evangelic gold. So are the exquisite parables concerning the joy of finding things lost.[3] The same grace-revealing charac-

[1] *Luke* iv. 22. [2] *Luke* vii. 36–50.
[3] *Luke* xv.

ter belongs to the parables of the Good Samaritan,[1] the Great Supper,[2] and the Pharisee and the Publican.[3] They foster the saving instinct, and hold out hope to those who need to be succoured and saved. The last-named is described as a parable concerning those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and *despised others*. Its aim is to condemn not merely the self-complacency, but more especially the contempt, and to encourage the despised by letting them know that they were at least not beyond the sympathies of *God*. The winsome stories of Zacchæus[4] and the penitent thief[5] worthily crown a collection of gleanings which fully justify the encomium on Luke's Gospel that it is "the Gospel of the sinful."

Little needs to be added by way of summarising the results of the foregoing discussion. The particulars under the four heads of omissions, emphasised statements, under-statements, and additions, all conspire to one end, viz., to exhibit the Lord of the Church divine in *Power*, *Holiness*, and *Goodness*. The holiness of Jesus is so zealously guarded that He appears not only without sin but even free from all that bears the most remote resemblance to moral infirmity in temper, word, or action. The result is that the natural individuality of Jesus, so conspicuous in Mark, is seen in Luke only in faded outline. Luke's picture of Jesus is one-sided. The side shown is indeed so attractive that we thank the Evangelist for what he has given rather than blame him for what he has withheld. Yet we ought distinctly

[1] *Luke* x. 25–37. [2] *Luke* xiv. 15–24. [3] *Luke* xviii. 9–14.
[4] *Luke* xix. 1–10. [5] *Luke* xxiii. 39–43.

to see, and acknowledge to ourselves, that his presentation is defective. We cannot accept as complete a Christ who is simply good and kind. We need a Christ who can be angry, indignant, terrible in passionate abhorrence of evil; who can hurl thunder-bolts of denunciation at the "unwedgeable and gnarled oak" of powerful, privileged, and plausible iniquity. The love of Jesus to the sinful, as it appears in this Gospel, is beautiful; but the hatred of Pharisaism which is somewhat thrown into the background is equally indispensable. So likewise is the stern purpose, at all costs, to purge out of the disciples evil elements of temper which, left unchecked, would soon turn the new society of which they were to form the nucleus into a community little better in spirit than that in which the scribes bore sway. Who that considers to what extent Christianity has been wrecked by priestly assumption can regret that the evangelic records have so faithfully shown how contrary that leaven was to the mind of the Lord Jesus?

The view I have ventured to present of Luke's treatment of the evangelic tradition, in so far as it concerns the persons of Jesus and His disciples, can be turned to some account for apologetic purposes. It makes for the historicity of the Synoptical records. The remark applies even to Luke's omissions. These at first view seem to cast a dark shadow of doubt on the historical value of the material omitted. We are inclined to argue: if Luke had known these things, he would have reported them; and how could a man who took such pains to inform himself fail to know them if they had

been actual facts? When the element of intention is introduced, this reasoning falls to the ground. We then perceive that there were classes of facts which the Evangelist would not care to preserve. Things not known, therefore presumably not real, become things probably known which the Evangelist did not choose to introduce into his narrative. At the very least, intentional omission, once established, cancels all presumption against historicity. On the other hand, abridged or qualified reporting bears positive evidence to the reality of the fact reported. Whatever a writer tones down he is tempted to omit. In adopting the course of understating rather than omitting he becomes, so to speak, a reluctant witness to the historicity of the materials so dealt with. Finally, even heightened statements in their own way contribute to the cumulative apologetic argument. If the added elements be the result of fuller information, this is self-evident. Even if they be exaggerations for a purpose, they tend to establish the truth of the basal narrative. They show within what narrow limits editorial discretion was willing to restrict itself. An author who has ideas to embody is tempted to invent when he cannot find. Luke did not invent, but only at most touched up stories given to his hand by a reliable tradition. This is his method in narratives common to his Gospel with those of Matthew and Mark. Noting this, we can well believe it to have been his method all through, even in those portions of his Gospel where he is our sole authority.

CHAPTER IV

THE SYNAGOGUE MINISTRY

THE first thing the average reader of the Gospels has to do in reference to this department of our Lord's work is to get it fairly into his mind that there was such a thing as a systematic synagogue ministry. With the exception of the narratives relating to visits made to the two synagogues of Capernaum and Nazareth, the Gospels contain only general statements, such as that in Mark i. 39: "He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils."[1] Such summary notices, giving no details, make little impression on the mind. You read the words, pass on, and the fact briefly stated takes no place in your permanent conception of Christ's evangelistic activities. Even when we pause to reflect for a moment on what these general statements say, we are apt to think that they are not to be taken in earnest, as pointing to a deliberately planned, persistent, extensive effort to bring to the ears of the men of Galilee, through the convenient medium of the synagogue, the good news of the Kingdom of God.

The clearest evidence that this is a mistaken view

[1] *Vide* also in *Matthew* iv. 23.

is contained in Mark i. 38, where Jesus is represented as giving such a preconceived plan as His reason for leaving Capernaum. "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth." He has addressed a Sabbath audience in one synagogue, and He desires to do the same elsewhere. The manner of His departure lends emphasis to the purpose. It was hasty, because He feared that the time of His Galilean ministry might be cut short, and His preaching mission interrupted, by the enmity of the scribes. A synagogue ministry, as distinct from a street ministry, depended on the good-will of others, and Jesus understood that it must begin at once if it was to be at all. The departure was secret, before the dawn, while men slept, because He feared detention by a people valuing His presence for the healing power displayed on so splendid a scale on the previous Sabbath evening. Evidently Jesus is very much in earnest about that preaching tour. It is not an afterthought, or a pretext, but a fixed purpose; one of the main lines along which He means to conduct His work as the Light of Galilee. The prayer with which He ushered in the day on the eventful morning of that flight from Capernaum shows the same thing. In the life of Jesus, protracted solitary prayer was ever the prelude of important undertakings.

The plan was a large one. "In their synagogues throughout all Galilee": that meant many sermons. In the time of our Lord there were many towns in that province large enough to have at least one syn-

agogue. Josephus gives the number at 204, the smallest of them having 15,000 inhabitants.[1] Even supposing, with many modern scholars, that there is some mistake or exaggeration in the statement, it witnesses indubitably to a very thickly-peopled country. What a time it would take to go over all these towns, even if advantage were taken of the week-day meetings on Mondays and Fridays, as well as of the more solemn assemblies for worship on the Sabbaths. The scheme would assume more manageable dimensions if the purpose was to visit chiefly the smaller towns. This is suggested by the Greek phrase for which the English equivalent in the Authorised Version is "next towns," the literal meaning being the next *village*-towns.[2] It is not improbable that Jesus, knowing that a selection must be made, resolved to visit, in the first place, the lesser centres of population, having possibly only a single synagogue. He might be led to adopt this course by various considerations: His deep yearning to preach the gospel to the *poor*, the likelihood of greater receptivity to His message among *villagers*, the hope that much good work might thus be done *quietly*, with smaller risk of attracting the sinister attention of the religious authorities.

How far did Jesus succeed in carrying out His beneficent plan? The expression "all Galilee," used by the Evangelists, would seem to point to complete execution. But perhaps we ought not to press the

[1] *Vide* his *Vita*, chap. xlv., and *B. J.*, iii. 3, 2.

[2] εἰς τὰς ἐχομένας κωμοπόλεις (*Mark* i. 38).

"all," but take the fact to be that a very considerable number of places were visited in succession so as to justify such a colloquial exaggeration. This speaks to an interval of months between the time of Christ's departure from Capernaum to that of His return. From Mark ii. 1 indeed we might infer that the period consisted of only a few days. But a slightly altered grouping of the words does away with that impression. Instead of the rendering in the Authorised Version: "And again He entered into Capernaum after some days, and it was noised that He was in the house," we may substitute: "And He entered again into Capernaum, and after some days the report went abroad: He is home." The situation is easily conceivable. Jesus returns almost as quietly as He went away. He is some days in the town before they know. But when they know, what lively interest in the fact! The memory of events now some months old revives: the marvellous address in the synagogue, followed by an equally marvellous cure; the marvels of the day crowned and eclipsed by the wholesale healing ministry of the evening. They say to one another: the great Preacher and Healer is back among us again. "He is home."

Yes! home and welcome to most, but not to all. The situation is altered somewhat. The scribes are on the alert. So when the crowd gathers around the newly returned Master, some of them are present to watch what goes on. And when a poor paralysed man, physically and morally a wreck, is brought to be healed, and Jesus, going to the root of the evil and

aiming at reviving the smoking wick of hope in the poor sufferer's breast, says in cordial tones: "Courage, child! thy sins are forgiven," the scribes, by look if not by audible word, say: "Why does this person thus speak? he blasphemeth." Here at last is the mischief Jesus instinctively feared from the first, the well-grounded dread making Him anxious to start on the preaching tour as quickly as possible, in hope to get over a considerable amount of ground before the latent antagonism began to reveal itself in active attempts at frustration. What if such attempts have brought Him back to Capernaum sooner than He otherwise would have come? What if secret correspondence between the scribes of Capernaum and the rulers of synagogues in other towns have resulted in closed doors, opportunities of speech refused, a beneficent plan broken off half executed? It is not unlikely. Reading between the lines, we get this as a not improbable version of the story: Jesus meant to evangelise all Galilee, and He did actually preach in not a few synagogues, but ecclesiastical wire-pulling interrupted His work; the scribes compelled Him to return prematurely home, and they were there to watch Him on His return.

Concerning the synagogue ministry, we have, as already indicated, little definite information. Yet we are not so entirely in the dark as to its nature as we might at first imagine. We know the general features of that ministry, the estimates formed of it by the people and by the Evangelists, and at least the text of one of the addresses.

1. The general features were *preaching*, *teaching*, and *healing* according to Matthew, *preaching* and *casting out devils* according to Mark. By preaching, as distinct from teaching, may be understood the proclamation of the elementary truths concerning the Kingdom of God as a kingdom of grace: the paternal love of God, the hope that is in His mercy for the most sinful, the worth of man to God even at the worst, the duty of repentance, and the possibilities of sanctity for the penitent. By teaching, on the other hand, is denoted instruction in the theory, so to speak, of the kingdom: its absolute worth, its imperial claims, its moral ideal in itself and in contrast to current conceptions. From the nature of the case, and from the omission by Mark of any separate mention of teaching, it is probable that *preaching* was the staple element in our Lord's synagogue discourses. Teaching was for disciples, preaching for the people. That healing acts were a frequent accompaniment of the preaching goes without saying. For even if Jesus did not start on His Galilean mission with a set purpose to heal, He was always willing to give succour on demand. And as disease is everywhere, and the desire for healing is not less universal, it may be taken for granted that there were few of the village towns where something similar to the incident in the Capernaum synagogue did not happen: demoniacal possession or some other human ailment cured by the Preacher to the astonishment of all. The story of Christ's visit to the synagogue in Capernaum may be taken as a sample of what occurred all over Galilee. One exception indeed is specified, and it may be viewed

as an exception which proves the rule. Jesus, it is recorded, did no mighty work in *Nazareth;*[1] not for want of sick people, nor for want of power, but because the villagers would not give Him the chance. They were so chagrined at a fellow-townsman being so distinguished that they would rather let their diseased relatives die than give Him an opportunity of showing His greatness. So far can prejudice go.[2]

2. The reported estimates of the synagogue ministry are various. That of the people, as is their way, was merely emotional, an expression of honest and intense admiration: What is this? A new teaching! and an unheard-of kind of power! That of the Evangelists gives us some insight into the quality of the preaching which immediately created popular surprise. Mark uses the method of comparison: He taught not as the scribes — they *by* authority citing Rabbis of reputation in support of their dogmas; He *with* authority, citing nobody, speaking out the intuitions of the soul, and leaving these to commend themselves to the minds of ingenuous hearers. Luke comes nearest to the heart of the matter when he employs the expression "words of grace" to characterise the utterance of Christ in the synagogue of Nazareth. I believe we shall not go far wrong if we take that phrase as applicable not merely to that particular discourse, but to the synagogue discourses generally, and view it as referring not chiefly

[1] *Mark* vi. 5.

[2] Euthymius Zigabenus, a Greek monk of the tenth century, author of a fine commentary on the Gospels, remarks: "It was not for Jesus to benefit them against their will" (*οὐκ ἔδει βιαίως εὐεργετεῖν αὐτούς*).

to graceful diction, but rather to gracious thought, — to matter rather than to manner. Gracious thought concerning the loving-kindness of God, sweetly and winsomely spoken, that in Nazareth and everywhere was the burden of Christ's synagogue sermons. Not that the Preacher is a man of one idea. He has many thoughts about the Kingdom, some of them deep and abtruse, fit only for the disciplined ear of the few, some of them severe and exacting, some of them stern in their bearing on the teaching and practice of the scribes and Pharisees; all of which He utters on due occasion. But the grace of God is His favourite theme. The Gospel of Divine love runs like a sweet melody through the rich, varied, sublime harmonies of His religious teaching. That God is good, that He is a Father, that He shows His good-will to all in manifold ways in His ordinary providence; that He careth for the weak, the lowly, and even the low; that in Him is plenteous redemption, even for those whom men despair of: such were the things He delighted to say, said to all He met, and wished to say once at least in the hearing of all to whom he could gain access. Therefore, while there was doubtless endless variety in the colouring and contents of His synagogue addresses, there would be a certain pervading similarity, perhaps some ideas deliberately repeated in unvarying forms of language; for all great teachers who have some very decided message to deliver are apt to repeat themselves, not in helplessness, but because they cannot satisfy themselves without saying, and saying again and again.

3. The *text* of the address in the synagogue of Naza-

reth beginning, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," happily preserved by Luke, supplied the best possible key-note for such gracious discourse. That it is historical I doubt not, but it is also typical. It is the kind of text Jesus would choose for a popular sermon. The Scripture He was to preach from might not always be in His power. He might oftenest have to take His theme from the fixed lesson for the day in the Law or in the Prophets. Nothing, however, could come wrong to Him, for He knew His Bible intimately, and had some deep spiritual thought in His mind associated with every important passage, which He could utter in fitting language on the spur of the moment. Think, for example, what He brought out *impromptu* from the superficially unpromising words: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."[1] From the greater number of Old Testament texts, whether selected by Himself or given to His hand, He would have no difficulty in eliciting the veritable Gospel of the Kingdom under one or another of its aspects by most legitimate exegesis. For no one knows till he has examined into the matter how much that is truly evangelic in spirit is to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures: in Genesis, in Deuteronomy, in the Psalter, and in the Prophets; how much that is in full sympathy with the splendid text from Isaiah which formed the theme of the Nazareth discourse concerning the anointing of Messiah to preach good tidings to the meek and to bind up the broken-hearted. One of the causes of admiration in our Lord's synagogue audiences

[1] *Matt.* xxii. 32; *Mark* xii. 27; *Luke* xx. 38.

would be the ease and naturalness with which He drew from familiar words precious truths which they had never seen there before, turning what had appeared "flint into a fountain of waters." [1] And when the word even to the popular view was manifestly not flint but fountain, another cause of admiration would be the happy manner in which, as if by a spell, He cleared the fountain of polluting, choking matter, so that its waters appeared pellucid as crystal, inviting the thirsty to drink from a pure well of salvation. "Let us make man in our image"; "I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt"; "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord"; "With Him is plenteous redemption"; "Thou, O Lord, art our Father"; "In Thee the fatherless findeth mercy"; "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still"; "I will put My law in their inward parts"—what thrilling, gracious, unforgettable words Jesus could speak on such texts, making the hearts of His hearers burn as He talked to them on the Sabbath days! The synagogue teaching of the scribes was dry-as-dust even when they stumbled on oracles like these, but that was their fault, not the fault of the sacred words. It was their unhappy way to choke all the wells with the rubbish of Rabbinical theology, and part of Christ's mission was to remove the rubbish, and restore the intuition of the perennial sense of the Holy Writings.

More of the words and deeds of Jesus than we know may really have belonged originally to the synagogue

[1] *Ps.* cxiv. 8.

ministry, though the connection is not indicated in the evangelic records. Some have tried to construct an inaugural synagogue discourse out of materials now forming part of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, piecing together, *e.g.*, the counsel against care, the lesson on prayer, the warning against judging, the law of reciprocity, and the closing parable of the wise and foolish builders, and offering the composition as a sample of what Jesus was likely to say in a *concio ad populum.*[1] This is purely conjectural, and not very probable conjecture either; for what we have been accustomed to call the *Sermon* on the Mount is in all probability rather a summary of *disciple-teaching* on various topics carried on perhaps for a week, during a season of retreat on the mountain plateau overlooking the Galilean lake. We have something more to support the supposition that certain parables in the evangelic collections, and some also of the recorded miracles had their primary place in the synagogue ministry. Luke gives the parables of *the Grain of Mustard Seed* and *the Leaven* as pendants to a synagogue incident,[2] suggesting the inference that they were spoken in a synagogue discourse. They happily illustrate a truth not too recondite for popular apprehension: that great things may grow out of very insignificant beginnings; and by their simplicity and brevity are well fitted for preaching to the million. The same remark applies to another pair of parables, the Hidden Treasure and the Precious Pearl.[3] The one pair would aptly clinch the moral of

[1] So Keim in his well-known work on the Life of Jesus.
[2] *Luke* xiii. 18–21. [3] *Matt.* xiii. 31–33.

an address whose import was: despise not the kingdom I bring nigh to you because it seems a small, humble thing; the other with equal felicity would enforce the lesson: count the kingdom the chief good, joyfully secure it at all costs. That Jesus did use similitudes in these popular addresses may be taken for granted. "Without a parable spake He not unto them," observes Mark, with reference to our Lord's manner of speaking to the multitude.[1] How could He fail to employ that method of instruction, having personally such a taste and talent for it, speaking to people accustomed to it, and knowing full well the power of the parables to entertain, to lodge truth permanently in the mind, and to make the meaning clear? To make the meaning clear, I say, for undoubtedly that was the real aim of the parabolic method, not, as one might hastily infer from certain words reported by Mark as spoken by Jesus in connection with the Parable of *the Sower*, to hide truth from the eyes of the people, and tickle their ears with words to which they attached no rational sense.[2] Of such an inhuman purpose Jesus was (need it be said?) utterly incapable.

Two miracles certainly, and one most probably, belong to the synagogue ministry. The first of the three is the cure of the demoniac in the synagogue of Capernaum, reported by Mark and Luke;[3] the second is the cure of the woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, reported by Luke only,[4] and the third is the cure of the leper, reported by all the three

[1] *Mark* iv. 34.
[2] *Mark* iv. 12.
[3] *Mark* i. 21–28; *Luke* iv. 31–37.
[4] *Luke* xiii. 10–13.

Evangelists.[1] Mark brings it in immediately after his general statement concerning the preaching of Jesus in the synagogues of Galilee, and the inference is natural that it owes its place to its being regarded by the Evangelist as an anecdote of that ministry. In point of varied interest the last-mentioned healing act eclipses the other two, especially as reported by Mark, whose version of the leper-story is a good instance of his realism. Common to all the three narratives is the leper's "If Thou wilt, Thou canst," and Christ's peremptory injunction to the healed man, "Go, show thyself to the priest." Both features are interesting: the former as showing how completely even at this early period faith in Christ's *power* to heal any form of disease had taken hold of the popular mind, and how the more difficult faith in His loving *will* lagged behind; the latter as evincing a desire on Christ's part at once to make the benefit complete by adding to the physical cure social restoration, and to act in a respectful, conciliatory spirit towards existing institutions and established authority. That recognition of the priest's place and function gains added meaning if, as I have supposed, Jesus already feared the interference of the scribes. It assumes in that case the aspect of a policy of conciliation adopted in the interest of the mission, in hope to make a favourable impression on synagogue magnates and retain their good-will as long as possible.

To these common elements of the story Mark adds the compassion of Jesus, and the assumption after the

[1] *Matt.* viii. 2–4; *Mark* i. 40–45; *Luke* v. 12–16.

cure of an imperative, threatening manner to insure that the healed man shall go away at once and report himself to the priest, instead of remaining content with merely being whole. The addition of these traits is not an affair of mere word-painting. Both are valuable contributions to a vivid reproduction of the situation as observed by an eye-witness. Christ's compassion was a very noticeable feature to an impressionable onlooker like Peter, and one cannot wonder that he laid emphasis on it in reporting the incident. The pity of Jesus is a commonplace to us, but it was not such to the Galilean villagers. It takes men little accustomed to anything in the world but callous indifference towards other people's woes some time to believe in exceptional, unique, phenomenal love like that of Jesus. They can more easily believe in miraculous *power* than in miraculous *love*. They are able to say "Thou canst," before they are able to say "Thou wilt." Mark's addition, therefore, only shows that he understood perfectly the situation, or, at least, that he is a faithful reporter of the words of one who did. The other particular peculiar to Mark is equally deserving of appreciation. It reveals another phase of Christ's love, in which it puts on an aspect of anger in its determination that the healed leper shall get the whole and not merely the half of the possible benefit. Jesus frowns, speaks imperatively and impatiently, and even thrusts the man out as it were by the shoulders, with an order to go at once. How life-like! how beautiful this subtle play of feeling, this sudden transition from one mood of love to another; from pity to

impatience, from the softly spoken "I will" to the masterful "thou must"!

What now was the *result* of this ministry whereof so scanty a crop of incidents has been preserved to us? It may be stated in a sentence: great temporary popularity, little permanent fruit. Of the popularity we find a trace even in the descriptions of the crowds that afterwards gathered around Jesus. Matthew follows up his general account of the synagogue ministry with a brief notice of the rising tide of enthusiasm in which Galilee occupies a prominent place. "There followed Him great multitudes of people *from Galilee*, and Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judæa, and from beyond Jordan."[1] In the corresponding statement of Mark, Galilee is even more pointedly indicated as the main contributor to the vast assembly. The second Evangelist distinguishes two crowds, a very large one coming from Galilee, and a considerable but by no means so great one coming from various other parts. What he says is this: "A *great* multitude from *Galilee* followed; and from Judæa, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and beyond Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon, a multitude *great*"[2] — the epithet "great" following the noun in the second case, as if to say: "large also, but not so large." Galilee sends a larger contingent than all the rest of the country. This is what the synagogue sermons and the cures have come to. The Galileans cannot part with the Preacher and Healer. They are as unwilling to lose Him as were the people of Capernaum when He suddenly left them

[1] *Matt.* iv. 25. [2] *Mark* iii. 7, 8.

after that memorable Sabbath evening. Therefore they followed Him in vast numbers from the various towns He had visited, crowding around Him, jostling Him, knocking against Him, in hope even in that rude way to obtain a cure for their ailments,[1] insomuch that it was necessary to have a boat in readiness wherewith to escape sea-wards in case the pressure became utterly unbearable.[2]

Altogether a phenomenal popularity; yet, Jesus Himself being witness, the abiding spiritual outcome seems to have been inconsiderable. The evidence for this is two-fold: the Parable of *the Sower*,[3] and the complaint against the three cities, Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.[4] The parable is in reality a critical review of Christ's past Galilean ministry. Probably all the parables spoken from the boat on the day on which *the Sower* was uttered were of this character, though Matthew's collection contains some of a different type. Jesus was in the mood to tell the people who followed Him and admired Him what He thought of them, and what value He set on their discipleship. His estimate as given in *the Sower* is very depressing. In effect it amounts to this: much seed sown, little fruit. The word of the kingdom, that is to say, scattered with a free hand in the synagogues of Galilee, and, for one reason or another, in most instances no crop visible after sufficient time had elapsed to test the movement by results. The parable hints at some of the reasons of this unfruitfulness in its description of

[1] *Mark* iii. 10.
[2] *Mark* iii. 9.
[3] *Matt.* xiii. 3; *Mark* iv. 3; *Luke* viii. 4.
[4] *Matt.* xi. 20; *Luke* x. 13.

the various sorts of ground on which the seed chanced to fall. The beaten footpath, the shallow soil — a thin layer of earth on a bed of rock — and the land foul with seeds or roots of thorns, represent types of men with whom all religious teachers are familiar: the thoughtless, the superficial, and the men who are not destitute of mental power or spiritual depth but whose great lack is purity and singleness of heart. There were men in Galilee answering to all these types; some with whom the Preacher had not a chance, some on whom He soon and easily made an impression, some whose capacity and seriousness gave promise of something more than temporary interest, even of permanent discipleship, yet destined to disappoint expectation through lack of moral simplicity. The fewest were those whose minds resembled a soil at once soft, deep, and clean: men of honest and good hearts, sincerely regarding the Kingdom of God as the chief end, and seeking it with generous devotion. It was altogether a disenchanting, bitter experience. It made Jesus feel, like the prophet Isaiah, as if He had been sent to the synagogues of Galilee not for recovery of sight by the blind, and of hearing by the deaf, but rather to make blind men blinder, and deaf men deafer than ever — as if this were the chief effect of His preaching as a whole, and of the parabolic pictures in particular, with which His addresses were enriched, and which seemed to His hearers their main attraction. If intention were to be judged by result, one might say that Jesus had gone on that preaching tour for the very purpose of shutting eyes and ears; but of

course that would be a grievous, fatal misunderstanding of His spirit.

The disappointment connected with the synagogue ministry led to a change in the plan of Jesus. He resolved, henceforth, to devote more attention to the select few who showed intellectual and spiritual capacity for discipleship. From the great multitude he chose a limited number of susceptible hearers, and from these again an inner circle of twelve. In this small field He hoped in due season to reap a rich harvest of thirty, sixty, and an hundred fold.

The complaint against the Galilean towns is informing as well as saddening. It gives us a momentary glimpse of an extensive ministry whereof very scanty memorials have been preserved. Chorazin, one of the towns named, is nowhere mentioned except in this reproachful word. It is supposed to have been situated on the highway to Tyre from Capernaum on the western side of the upper Jordan. It was, doubtless, one of the many towns Jesus visited in connection with His synagogue ministry, where He had not only preached but wrought some remarkable cures. For another thing noticeable in this complaint is that the emphasis of its lament lies not on fruitless preaching, but rather on fruitless *mighty works*. From this we learn that healing acts, often remarkable, like the cure of the leper, were a common if not constant accompaniment of the preaching ministry in Galilee. We are not to suppose, however, that Jesus Himself laid chief stress on them. He looks at the matter from the point of view of His Galilean hearers. He is aware that what

they most admired and valued was the cures wrought on the sick, and what He says of them and to them is, in effect, this: "Ye heard Me in your synagogues, and, what is more important in your eyes, ye saw My works with astonishment and thankfulness at the time. And what has been the result? No change in spirit or in life: ye remain as ye were, as thoughtless, shallow, and preoccupied as ever." "They repented not."

No change noticeable in the life of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, selected to represent the many Galilean cities visited in connection with the synagogue ministry — such is the melancholy verdict of the Preacher. The reference to Tyre and Sidon suggests that these three towns are named not merely because they had been exceptionally privileged, but because of their *commercial importance*. If so, then we get this result, that the commercial section of Jewish society was as inappreciative in its attitude towards Jesus as the religious section. Differing widely on the surface, they were at one in this, that neither sought the Kingdom of God and the righteousness of God as the chief good of life.

Truly a sad account of a people with such a spiritual history behind it. How depressing to think that One anointed by the Spirit of the Father for an evangelistic mission should have no better report to give at the close! Alas! it is more or less the report and the burden of all high ministries in this world! Yet it is best not to say too much about it, or to brood over it, or to allow ourselves to be driven into pessimism by it. Keep cheerful and hopeful always, and preach a real,

acceptable gospel, telling men not merely that iniquities prevail against them, but that as for their transgressions God can and will purge them away. There is quite enough pessimism in the world without bringing it into the pulpit. Surely it is out of place there! And what good can it do? Men are saved by hope, not by despair; and if the preacher would make others hope, he must be hopeful himself. In spite of all disappointment, go on speaking sweetly and reasonably, now and then embodying truth in a parable, and leave the word to work like a charm. If that way fails, nothing else will succeed. So Jesus continued to do His work, while occasionally making His complaint. He was no pessimist. He was simply, as has been remarked, the one great religious Optimist who cannot be accused of shallowness, or of shutting His eyes to the evil that is in the world.

It is an interesting question in what relation the mission of the twelve disciples stood to the synagogue ministry of their Master. It may have been intended in part to supplement it by spreading the good news in Galilee more completely than Jesus had been able to do. But the mission of the disciples was not to preach in the *synagogues:* for that they were not yet fit. Theirs was a *house* ministry, not a synagogue ministry. They were to enter into the houses of such as were willing to receive them, and to stay there as long as they remained in any particular place, talking to the family and to such neighbours as dropped in concerning the Kingdom and its King. Of the Kingdom they could say little beyond the most elementary statement of

God's good-will to the penitent, but concerning the King they would have more to tell. Probably the main part of their conversation consisted of anecdotes about their Master, recollections of what He had said or done during His preaching tour; now a parable, anon a healing act reported for the entertainment and benefit of their hearers. Such communications would in most cases insure for them a welcome, though in His instructions to the apprentice missioners Jesus contemplated the possibility of an opposite reception: "Whosoever shall not receive you."[1] The words may express a fear suggested by personal experience of work frustrated or interrupted by religious prejudice in His own early effort to evangelise Galilee.

[1] *Matt.* x. 14; *Mark* vi. 11.

CHAPTER V

THE MISSION TO THE PUBLICANS

Of this part of our Lord's work, not less than of the synagogue ministry, the ordinary reader of the Gospels has a most inadequate idea. It amounts to this, that Jesus happened on one occasion to be present as a guest at a social entertainment given by one of His disciples, named Matthew or Levi, to associates of the publican class to which he had himself previously belonged, and being present, ate with them without hesitation, and doubtless also addressed to His fellow-guests some gracious words, indicating that the door of the Kingdom was open even to them. Not a few careful students of the Evangelic Records have been content with this meagre conception. Yet if we could only shake off the trammels of custom, so as to be able to take a fresh view of the matter, a little reflection would suffice to convince us that what has just been stated cannot be the whole truth or even the principal part of it. From the nature of the case Jesus cannot have been merely passive in the matter, in the sense in which persons invited to an ordinary festive gathering are passive, each one going because he has received an invitation from the host, and without knowing whom he is to meet. The newly called dis-

ciple would not have ventured to invite his Master to eat with *publicans* without first ascertaining that He was willing to meet them. Nay, one may go further, and say that the publican-disciple would never have thought of or hinted at such a meeting unless he had been given to understand that the Master was not only willing but desirous to have social intercourse with the outcast classes of Capernaum. The initiative must really have been with Jesus. The whole plan must have been His. He must have had in His mind a deliberate intention to come into close fraternal contact with the "publicans and sinners." Of this design the Evangelists say nothing; they simply report very briefly the main events: Matthew's call and the ensuing feast. But once we have got the idea of such a design into our minds, we recognise in these two events simply the working out of the plan — the method employed by Jesus to give effect to His gracious purpose. First He calls to discipleship a *publican*, doubtless with a view to ulterior service as an apostle, but likewise with a view to immediate service as an intermediary between Himself and the publicans of Capernaum. Then, through Matthew as His agent, He calls together the class to which the new disciple belonged, that He may eat with them and speak to them the good news of the Kingdom.[1]

That Jesus would entertain such a plan was to be expected. We have seen how much in earnest He was about a systematic synagogue ministry. But his earnestness was not one-sided. He desired to do His duty

[1] *Matt.* ix. 9-13; *Mark* ii. 13-17; *Luke* v. 27-32.

as the Herald of the Kingdom, impartially, to all classes of Jewish society. In this connection we may distinguish four classes. First, the religious leaders of Israel; secondly, the respectable synagogue-frequenting body of the people; thirdly, the hidden minority of devout men and women who had spiritual affinity for the New Teaching; lastly, the social pariahs. Now that Jesus performed the function called for in reference to the first three of these four classes, is sufficiently evident from the Gospels. He criticised faithfully and thoroughly scribes and Pharisees, that being what they needed. He went the round of the synagogues of Galilee and preached in them in turn, at least in as many of them as possible. He was constantly on the outlook for persons of special spiritual susceptibility and promise, and gradually formed them into a disciple-circle for the purpose of careful instruction. In view of these familiar facts, who can doubt that He did not neglect the lowest pariah class, that He was equally conscientious and thorough in regard to them, that He cared for their spiritual interest in no casual, haphazard, or half-hearted way, but systematically, persistently, and very cordially? Neglect the publicans! One would say that, whatever class was to be overlooked, it would not be they. Neglect the "sinners," neglect the neglected and despised! Impossible for such a one as Jesus.

It might be supposed, however, that there was no need for a special mission to the "publicans and sinners," that their interests would be sufficiently provided for, *e.g.*, by the synagogue ministry. But the

fact was not so. The publicans were practically, if not formally, excommunicated. They were as heathens in the esteem of religious Jews. A learned writer on this subject states that publicans were not reckoned in religious society, quoting from the Talmud words to this effect: a religious person who becomes a publican must be driven out of religious company.[1] "No money known to come from them was received into the alms-box of the synagogue or the corban of the Temple."[2] Such being the state of feeling, it is evident that few if any publicans would have an opportunity of hearing any of Christ's synagogue discourses. They would probably not have been admitted even if they had sought entrance, and they were not likely to do that, for men all the world over avoid places of worship where they know they are not welcome. There was just one chance for the publicans. They might join the crowds that gathered about Jesus wherever He went, and get the benefit of His open-air preaching. That they seem to have done to some extent, for in his report of Levi's feast Mark states that they (the publicans) were many, and that they followed Jesus.[3] That was so far well. It might content the publicans, but it would not content the sinners' Friend. He would desire closer contact and more direct intercourse. In the interest they were showing He saw His opportunity, and Matthew's call and the feast following were the result.

[1] Otho, *Lexicon Rabbinico-philologicum*, p. 556.
[2] Article "Publican," in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.
[3] *Mark* ii. 15.

In the development of His plans our Lord followed the leadings of Providence. He began with a synagogue ministry, because, as that depended on the goodwill of others, it was important that it should be started at once and pushed on vigorously before the suspicions of the scribes were aroused. The mission to the publicans was undertaken after the return to Capernaum from the preaching tour in the synagogues of Galilee. It was the natural second step. They were a class whom the synagogue ministry, for reasons already indicated, had not reached, and their presence in the crowds that followed Jesus along the lake-shore showed that they were not beyond reach. An evangelising experiment among them was worth trying. So Matthew was called, and through him the festive gathering convened. The call of a publican to discipleship would immediately create expectation. It would at once be felt that He who took that bold step meant to do more, and that an event was impending that would create a sensation.

It was a great event. That is plainly indicated by all the three Evangelists; but readers of the narratives, pre-occupied with the notion of a private dinner party, readily fail to notice the fact. In each of the reports it is distinctly stated that "many" were present. That itself ought to open our eyes to the significance of the occasion, and make us think of a *congregation* embracing hundreds, rather than of a private entertainment to say a score of guests; meeting not in the dining chamber of a house, but in the large open court around which the apart-

ments of an Eastern house of the better class are built.[1]

Of course it was not a merely *festive* gathering. To eat and drink was not the sole or even the chief end of the meeting. Jesus from the first meant to speak to that remarkable assembly of social pariahs and moral nondescripts. The eating was subservient to that as the ultimate aim, a means of establishing cordial relations between Speaker and hearers, and opening a way for His message into their hearts. But in that respect it was all-important; hence the prominence given to it in the narratives. The Evangelists say nothing about the speaking; that they take for granted. They assume it will be understood by all their readers that Jesus would not meet with such a large company, and especially with a company of so peculiar a quality, without having something memorable and uniquely impressive to say to them concerning the Kingdom. As a matter of course He would tell them the good news of God. As a matter of course accordingly it is treated, a thing not needing to be mentioned. But of the eating careful note is taken, and for an obvious reason. It was the speciality, the thing that would create surprise on all sides — in fellow-guests and in outsiders; the thing that was sure to be extensively talked about and that would inevitably make a powerful impression of one sort or another, winning publicans, shocking scribes and

[1] Furrer, author of a delightful book on Palestine (*Wanderungen durch das heilige Land*) assumes as a matter of course that the meeting took place there.

Pharisees. In giving such prominence to the social aspect of the function the Evangelists only show their full comprehension and appreciation of the situation.

The thing of importance to note, however, is that Jesus understood the situation. He knew perfectly what He was doing. He knew that His line of action would create scandal and in all likelihood provoke malevolent misconstruction. But He felt that He must take the risk. He knew that no half-measures would do with the people He was trying to benefit. He must either be their friend, their comrade, out and out, or let them alone. If He could not, or would not, eat with them, out of a regard to social proprieties, the instinctive swift inference of the classes concerned would be: "He too is at heart a Pharisee. He cares a little for us, mildly pities us, would like to talk to us about religion; but He dare not sit down at the same table with us; He fears the censure of the virtuous, the tongue of the pious, the frown of those that pass for good." All this Jesus clearly perceived; therefore He pursued the policy of radical, fearless, thorough-going, comradeship. But He did not so act *from* policy. He acted spontaneously, without calculation, and without effort, at the bidding of a loving heart. *Phenomenal miraculous love* was at the bottom of the whole proceeding. Mere wisdom would not have been equal to the emergency. Nothing but love unexampled in Capernaum or anywhere else could have had the originality to conceive the plan, the courage

to adopt it, and the tact to carry it through. What cares such love for conventional proprieties or evil tongues? It leaps the fence, however high; it overflows the most carefully constructed embankments of social custom; it will have its way, and it is prepared to take the consequences.

Sure enough there were consequences to be reckoned with. That also the Evangelists are careful to record. He is a very simple man who fancies that he can indulge in the moral originality of Jesus, taking counsel only with love, and escape unpleasant consequences. All things new and original, in thought, and still more in action, are inevitably blamed. The best things, before men get accustomed to them, are treated as if they were the worst. So it came to pass that the conduct of Jesus provoked the question, "Why eateth your Master with the publicans and sinners?" Nor was that the end or the worst of the matter. It came at last to hideous, horrible calumny. They said in effect: He associates with the reprobates because He is a reprobate — a drunkard, a glutton, and what not.[1]

So deplorable a result almost tempts the question: Was that well-meant movement not after all a mistake? Has a man any right to throw away his good name in trying to do good to others? This is a question of casuistry that is not likely often to arise, for few have love enough to expose them to any danger. If any one feels inclined to raise the question in connection with our Lord's action in reference to

[1] *Matt.* xi. 19.

the publicans, it will be well that he first of all make an effort to understand the alternatives. There were, as has been already hinted, only two courses open: either to go the full length in comradeship or to let the publicans and sinners alone. A middle course in the circumstances was not possible. Therefore, taking care of His good name would have simply meant for Jesus treating the outcasts with the usual indifference. Now once for all that was simply impossible for Him. The one thing He could not do was to let people alone in their sin and misery. Surely a noble, honourable, blessed inability! And observe what the let-alone policy would have involved. It could not be limited to the case of the publicans; it must be carried through. If Jesus must neglect them to save His good name, how much more He would have to neglect! He would have to shun the *cross* to escape the shame. And what would that have come to? Saving Himself and failing to save others. Nay, failing ultimately even to save Himself. If Jesus Christ had made it His chief business to adapt His conduct to local and contemporary ideas, instead of being the Saviour of the world He would have been a Nobody. That is the penalty men pay who are too desirous to please their own time. In their anxiety to conciliate the prejudices of to-day they do nothing for the future, and are soon forgotten.

In the Capernaum movement in behalf of the publicans Jesus emphatically worked for the future. No part of His public ministry possesses a deeper or more abiding significance. As a revelation of His

spirit and a promise of great things to come, it stands on a much higher level than the synagogue ministry. That was a good work which had to be done sometime, and which was most fitly done at the commencement. But in it the activity of our Lord ran in the channel of a purely Jewish institution. The new wine was put into an old vessel. In that preaching tour among the synagogues of Galilee Jesus was simply a Minister of God to Israel. But in the mission to the publicans it was otherwise. The new wine was put into a new vessel. The new spirit found for itself at once a new sphere and a new method of working. Jesus then began to be a Servant of the Kingdom for the *world*. To the Jew a publican was as a heathen man. He is entitled to the honour as well as the dishonour of that identification, and to be regarded as the representative of the Gentiles as a recipient of the good news. The Capernaum movement was the forerunner of Gentile Christianity. A man of prophetic vision watching its progress might have said: "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

There was more than universalism latent in that mission. It was the cradle of Christian civilisation, which has for its goal a humanised society from whose rights and privileges no class shall be hopelessly and finally excluded. It was a protest in the name of God, who made of one blood all the nations and classes, against all artificial or superficial cleavages of race, colour, descent, occupation, or even of character, as of small account in comparison with that

which is common to all — the human soul, with its grand, solemn possibilities. It was an appeal to the conscience of the world to put an end to barbarous alienations and heartless neglects, and social ostracisms, cruelties, and tyrannies; so making way for a brotherhood in which "sinners," "publicans," and "Pharisees" should recognise one another as fellow-men and as sons of the one Father in heaven.

But it may be asked: If that movement was so important, why did the Evangelists give so inadequate an account of it? why, above all, did they not report what Jesus said on the occasion, which must have been extremely well worth recording, both in substance and in form? I will deal with this complaint before I am done, but meantime I remark that such as lament the lack ought at least to make the most of what the Evangelists have actually given us. They report one word Christ uttered on this occasion on no account to be overlooked; not spoken indeed to the publicans, but to men who blamed Him for associating with them. It is: "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." The saying consists of two parts, each of which serves a distinct purpose. The first part recognises the claims of the weak on the strong; the second proclaims a policy pursued in the interest of the Divine Kingdom. "Sinners," therefore, to be shunned you think? Nay, that is just the reason why they should be sought after, even as it is the sick whom the physician visits. Sinners, therefore, not worth caring about? Nay, to care for them is not only a duty im-

posed by love, but a policy dictated by wisdom. Of just such as these recovered from the error of their ways is the Kingdom of Heaven, whose best citizens are drawn not from those who pride themselves on their virtue, but from those who repent of their folly. A commonplace now, thanks to the teaching and example of Christ, but a startling doctrine in an age when it was thought that the one thing a man had to do was to be good himself without trying to make others good, and when it was taken for granted that a man with a mission, the founder of a new religion, the originator of a new society, would gather about him the best people he could find, and form them into a select, exclusive circle of superior persons. The world has cause to thank Jesus Christ that He came to attempt a more heroic task, to gather around Him the erring, the ignorant, the weak, that He might make them temperate, pure, thoughtful, strong. By undertaking this high mission He inaugurated a new era — the era of *grace*.

Returning now to the unrecorded address, two questions may be asked regarding it: Have we no clue to its drift? Is it quite certain that its most essential part has not been preserved?

1. The *action* of Jesus speaks. It speaks to us; it would speak even more impressively to the publicans and sinners. His presence there as a fellow-guest on equal terms, not as a patron but as a comrade, told its own story. All understood instinctively that religion, God, man, must be something quite different for this new Teacher from what they were for Pharisees

and scribes. "He does not hate us; He does not despise us. Holiness for Him does not mean keeping virtuously aloof from the unholy. Bad as we are, He seems to find in us some common element that He can love, some touch of nature that makes us kin, far apart though we be in our ways. In spite of our unpopular occupations and evil deeds, we are still at least men and women to Him, and apparently not without possibilities of becoming good men and good women. What kind of a God can He believe in? Surely not the God of the scribes! The God of the scribes, like the scribes themselves, looks askance on the like of us. The God of this Teacher must be a kindly Being like Himself, — One who would not be ashamed to be called even *our* God, and who would own us as His children, though men have cast us off." Such were the thoughts which in the form of dim feeling, if not in distinctly formulated conception, passed through the minds of that motley audience even before Jesus began to speak, suggested by the mere fact of His being there. By eating with them He silently preached a veritable Gospel in a *symbolic sacramental act.*

And when Jesus began to speak, what else could He do than express in word what He had already expressed in deed? His line of thought was dictated by the impression which, as He well understood, His presence was making upon His audience. He could only put into words what was in the mind of all. One needs only to realise the situation to be able to reconstruct the address, at least in outline. It would state in simple language the truth about God and His bear-

ing towards erring men. It would hold out hope of a better future for the worst, declaring that past sin was no inevitable doom, and that by repentance every man might pass from depravity and misery into purity and blessedness. It would strive to cure the doubt latent in every heart in that assembly as to the possibility of either God or man really caring for the like of them, a doubt too well justified by the contemptuous indifference with which they were treated on every hand. "He seems to care for us, else why is He here? But how can it be? What should make Him in this so utterly unlike all other men we have known? And as for God, is it credible He can be like this Man, and so utterly unlike all we have been taught to believe by our religious instructors?" Such was the state of mind with which the Speaker had to reckon; and if He dealt with it after His wonted manner, He would use some happy parable to make the difficult in the spiritual sphere clear by a familiar story taken from natural life.

2. This brings me to my second question. Is it quite certain that the essential part of the address of Jesus to the publicans has not been preserved? On the contrary, it is highly probable that we ought to discover the kernel of the address in the parables concerning finding things lost contained in the fifteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel. They suit exactly the requirements of the case as above indicated. And from Luke's introductory statement we learn that the parables grew out of a gathering of "publicans and sinners" to hear Jesus, at which He not only spoke to them, but ate

with them. This at once suggests the Capernaum assembly as the real historical occasion. True, in Luke's account the parables are represented as spoken not to the publicans, but to the Pharisaic fault-finders. But this fact creates no serious difficulty. In themselves the three parables, in their essential parts, might have been spoken to any audience, to a congregation in a synagogue, to a meeting of social pariahs, to disciples, to Pharisees. They would simply require a little modification to fit them to the particular audience. Quite possibly they were uttered again and again to all sorts of audiences. Matthew gives the first of the three, the Lost Sheep, as a word spoken to the Twelve in the Capernaum lesson on humility.[1] This is perfectly credible. And it is still more credible that not only the first, but the whole three, were spoken to the publicans. No more appropriate audience could be imagined, and no one knew that better than Jesus. It may be matter of regret that these parables have not come down to us in the form of a sermon to a publican audience. But that the tradition is at fault here is not surprising. The primitive Christian society cared much more for the words of the Master than for the exact historical occasions. Therefore we need not wonder if, in the book of the Oracles of the Lord compiled, according to the testimony of Papias, by Matthew, these golden words were faithfully preserved without clear indication of their historical connection. And we have the remedy in our own hands. We are not bound by the connection

[1] *Matt.* xviii. 12.

assigned to them by Luke or by the author of the First Gospel. We can give them the setting that is most fitting, and that brings out their full pathos, and claim them for the festive gathering in the court of the house of Levi, as the core of the address spoken by Jesus that day. It is no sin against true reverence to reproduce them here adapted to the circumstances by needful modification and brief preface.

Jesus, then, may have spoken after this manner:

"Men and women, I love you. I am your Brother. God, my Father and your Father, loves you, and will welcome you returning to Him in penitence. You doubt this, cannot think it possible. I wonder not, knowing how you have been spurned by your fellow-townsmen. Yet it is simple when you think of it. Your Father in heaven, and I your Brother on earth, only share the joy common to all who find things lost. Hear a parable:

"'A certain man had a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, left the ninety and nine in the wilderness and went after that which was lost until he found it. And when he found it he laid it on his shoulders with joy. And when he came home, he told his neighbours, and they were all glad that he had found the lost sheep.'

"Does the joy of the shepherd and his neighbours seem strange to you? Such joy would I, would my Father in heaven, have in any of you turning from evil to good.

"Not only the owner of a flock of sheep, but the poorest among you may know the joy of finding things lost. Hear another parable:

"'A certain woman had ten pieces of silver, and lost one of them. She lighted a lamp, swept the house, and sought till she found it. In her joy she told her neighbours, and they all rejoiced with her.'

"Think not there may be joy in the finding of a sheep or a coin, but no joy in finding a lost man. There may be more joy over a *man* found than over the finding of any lost *thing*. Hear yet another parable:

"'A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he longed to eat of the pods which were the swine's food, and no man gave unto him. But when he came to himself, he said: How many hired servants of my father have bread beyond their need, and

> I perish here with hunger. I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight. I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. And when he was still at a great distance from home his father saw him, and was touched with pity, and running towards him, he fell on his neck and fervently kissed him. And the son said: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to the servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, as becometh a son, and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry. For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"[1]

When we think of this parable as spoken to the publicans in the house of Levi, we perceive that the festivities of that day explain the parable, and that the parable explains the festivities.

What success Jesus had among the publicans we do not know, though I think that the story of the woman in Simon's house[2] may be taken as an illus-

[1] The second part of the parable concerning the elder brother relates to the Pharisees.

[2] *Luke* vii. 36–50.

trative example of the effect produced. She may have been there; let us suppose she was. That day she saw Jesus and heard Him speak. She went home and thought of what He had said. And this was the result; repentance, a gush of grateful emotion, permanent change of life.

The method of Jesus *deserved* success. Nothing but His deep, unfeigned love, going the whole way, will win men. Patronising philanthropy will not do. Those who practise it have nothing in common with Jesus. "He was no patron; He never acted in a condescending manner. He was the friend in the most genuine sense, even of publicans and harlots. His Kingdom cannot make progress through patronage, however kindly intentioned."[1]

[1] *The Spirit in Literature and in Life*, by Dr. Coyle. Houghton, Mifflin and Company: The Rand Lectures in Iowa, 1894. A thoughtful, suggestive book.

CHAPTER VI

JESUS LONGING FOR APT DISCIPLES

IT has been customary to call the remarkable utterance preserved in Matthew xi. 28–30 *The Gracious Invitation.* It has been gradually dawning on my mind that, without prejudice to the truth underlying that title, the saying might with even greater appropriateness be described as the *pium desiderium* of the Great Master for apt scholars. Its setting in the Gospel narrative suggests this view. It forms the suitable close of a chapter whose burden is *disillusionment.* Jesus appears in this chapter as a disappointed, though not discouraged or utterly forlorn, Teacher. Nowhere has He found the reception He might reasonably have looked for. The Galileans in whose synagogues He has preached, the people whom He has taught and healed wherever they gathered in crowds, the religious guides of Israel, even John the Baptist — one and all have failed to satisfy His desire for sincere, intelligent, sympathetic discipleship. He finds consolation in the honest attachment of some humble persons whom He calls "babes." Yet "babes," while a comfort, can hardly give complete contentment. Something higher is easily conceivable — a class of disciples

who are babes and *more*, combining the simplicity of children with the understanding and experience of men. That were the ideal; it is for that Jesus here sighs.

If this sigh of the Lord Jesus be placed in its proper historical environment in the eleventh chapter of Matthew, its date is approximately fixed by the various allusions to contemporary opinions contained therein. That the synagogue ministry is past, is shown by the complaint against the three cities.[1] The later mission to the publicans lies far enough behind to give time for the coining of slanderous epithets and sneering nicknames.[2] The fame of Jesus as a popular Preacher and Healer has spread far and wide till it has even reached the ears of the illustrious prisoner in Machaerus, provoking that doubting message, Art thou the Coming One?[3] The hostility of the scribes has had ample space to develop itself, so as to make it manifest that nothing but contempt or bitter opposition is to be looked for from the "wise and prudent."[4]

The situation thus defined suits such an utterance as that contained in Matthew xi. 25–30. The word and the environment fit into each other so well as to leave little doubt that the Evangelist has given that word its true position in his story, and as little that we may legitimately interpret it in the light of its context. In that case its general character is at once fixed. It is the utterance of One who is profoundly conscious of isolation, and who is driven in upon Him-

[1] *vv.* 20-24. [2] *v.* 19. [3] *v.* 3. [4] *v.* 25.

self and upon God, yet is full of peace and hope because He is assured that His Father knows and approves Him, and will not leave Him forlorn. Herein the soul of Jesus goes first up to God in resignation and trust,[1] then out in eager longing towards an ideal discipleship not actually there, perhaps not to be found then anywhere within the bounds of Palestine, but existing for the prophetic eye in the womb of the future, and to be born in due season.[2]

Surprise has often been expressed that Luke should have failed to preserve this precious oracle, giving only the outpouring of Christ's spirit towards God, and omitting what seems to suit his pages so well, the outgoing of His loving heart towards the labouring and heavy-laden. Of this hereafter. Meantime I remark that what is most to be wondered at is that any part of the utterance has been preserved; for it is really a soliloquy, a devotional meditation of our Lord by Himself apart, not a prayer spoken in the hearing of disciples. Even the part which concerns men, the sigh for true disciples, was not meant for human ears; it was simply a private breathing in which the weary heart of the Master unburdened itself. How then did it become known to any? True reverence perhaps would be best shown by abstaining from conjecture, but a simple suggestion may be pardoned. A ray of light seems to come to us from the fact that, on the testimony of Papias, the original reporter of our Lord's words was the Apostle *Matthew*, a publican, and in virtue of that occupation also a *scribe*. We have already

[1] *vv.* 25–27. [2] *vv.* 28–30.

seen that in calling a publican Jesus had an eye to service in connection with His mission to the class to which Matthew belonged. May He not also have had in view service with the pen by the same disciple, acting as a kind of secretary? How was it possible for Matthew, years after the Master left the world, to compile that book of *Logia*, *i.e.*, Oracles of the Lord? Did he draw simply on a retentive memory? Is it not more likely that he had at command *memoranda* written in bygone disciple days? Would not the instinct or habit that led him to write the *Logia* lead him to take notes at the time? and may the desire that this should be done not have been one of the reasons of his call? But, granting the reasonableness of this suggestion with reference to such sayings as those which constitute the Sermon on the Mount, it may be asked, What has all this to do with a soliloquy of Jesus such as that under consideration? How should even a private secretary know that his Master had thought or spoken so? Who can tell? Would it surprise you if the one disciple who had access to the Master at such a solemn hour was just the *publican;* the last first, the despised one privileged to be the confidant of the still more Despised One, despised too very specially on account of the relations He had chosen to enter into with the class to which that disciple belonged? When Jesus uttered this prayer, He passed through a kind of minor agony. At the hour of the greater agony He desired to have three disciples near Him. What wonder if He chose *one* to be with Him at the earlier crisis, and just the one most fitted

by his own previous experience to understand the Master's mood?

Not doubting that in the closing part of a precious leaf from the private prayer-book of Jesus, though preserved in the First Gospel alone, we have a true word of the Lord, let us try still further to penetrate into its inmost meaning.

In the utterance beginning with "I thank Thee, O Father," and ending with "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," there is a mixture of conflicting feelings—of satisfaction and longing, of thankfulness for babe-disciples, and intense desire for disciples who are "babes" and something more. The babes include the Twelve, though not them alone. Therefore Christ's feeling even about them is of a mixed character. He is pleased to have these simple Galileans about Him, and yet they do not fill His heart. He is conscious of isolation in their company. They love Him, but they do not understand Him. He has many thoughts in His mind, which He must speak if He is to fulfil His mission, and make known to the world the vision of the Kingdom which lies before His spiritual eye. But to whom are they to be spoken? To these babes? Yes, if no better audience can be had. They possess one fundamental requirement of discipleship—moral sympathy with the Teacher. They are ready to hear what He has to say, and they implicitly trust in His wisdom. To such hearers it is not idle to speak; revelation of the things of the Kingdom to the like of them, to some extent at least, is possible. But "these things" can be shown to such only in part. They cannot understand

them fully now, perhaps never. The natural limitation of their thinking powers, still more the limitations of their experience in the past or in the future, may present an insurmountable barrier to complete comprehension of the ideas of their Master. It is possible that there is not one among them who has it in him to attain full insight into the Christianity of Christ, or to become so completely possessed by the Master's mind as to be fit for the *rôle* of a thoroughly competent enthusiastic interpreter. It may be assumed as certain that not all, or even the majority, of them possess any such capacity. But to the presence or absence in his disciple-circle of persons endowed with such capabilities no great teacher or religious initiator can be indifferent. He will make the powers of his scholars a subject of frequent study. He will often consider what they severally are good for, what part this one or that one is fitted to play. And if among them all, after due consideration, he find no one able to receive or effectively reproduce his scheme of thought, whatever pleasure he may have in their society, he will certainly not be free from a haunting sense of loneliness and sadness.

It is in some such mood and for such reasons, it appears to me, that Jesus here speaks. With longing heart He looks over the heads of the actual disciple-circle, with wistful eye, in quest of an ideal discipleship.

But how is the ideal to be defined? What are the marks of the perfectly apt disciple? Jesus, we observe, addresses Himself to the "labouring and heavy laden."

Is that the kind of description we should look for, assuming that an ideal discipleship is in view? To answer the question, one must have some sort of *a priori* conception of the ideal. How, then, are we to conceive it? Somewhat after this manner:

1. The ideal disciple will, of course, possess in a high degree the disciple-*spirit:* desiring wisdom above all things, with a single mind and a pure heart.

2. He will feel profoundly that he has not yet attained. No one comes to the school of the wise who is self-satisfied — who thinks he knows all and can himself teach others.

The first of these qualities differentiates the disciple from the ordinary frequenter of synagogues, or the average hearer in a street crowd. The second differentiates the disciple from the "wise and prudent." Both qualities were possessed by the Twelve, and therein their Master had cause for satisfaction. But there is a third quality, which they probably all lacked.

3. The ideal disciple is one who has been prepared for receiving the instruction of a new master by disappointing trial of other masters. He has toiled in the quest of wisdom and has failed. He comes to the new school a weary man, longing for the rest which the revelation of truth satisfying to the whole inner being brings. He comes thoroughly qualified to appreciate the lessons he is to be taught by knowledge of other doctrines with which he can compare them. For men living in Palestine in the time of our Lord this would mean acquaintance with the teaching of the Rabbis, and the discovery by earnest experiment of its unsatis-

factory character. It would mean, in other words, an experience similar to that of Saul of Tarsus, who was first an enthusiastic disciple of, and then a convert from, Rabbinism. Saul's soul-history in those years was a very tragic business — a sore toil of the spirit ending in vexation and heaviness of heart. What if he had met Jesus while He was on earth, become one of His disciples and heard His golden words, and seen His gracious deeds from day to day, instead of being "one born out of due time"?[1] It might have made some difference in his conception of the Christian religion, and in the colour of his writings. But be this as it may, what I wish to say now is that it was for such disciples as he that Jesus craved; for men who were not merely simple, sincere, and honest-hearted, but also in possession of spiritual senses exercised to discern between good and evil; that is to say, not only between the obviously good and evil, but between the really and the reputedly good and between the really and the reputedly evil. To that the Twelve had not attained. Possibly there was not a single man living in Palestine at that time that had attained. The man who came inquiring concerning eternal life was on the way to the attainment; hence the interest he created in the mind of Jesus, who saw in him a possible Paul or Barnabas, and may, for ought we know, have thought of him as a substitute for a false disciple already suspected of treason. But he had the fatal defect of insufficient earnestness. He knew more than he was prepared to put in practice.

[1] 1 *Cor.* xv. 8.

Is the ideal disciple, as just described, properly designated by the epithets "labouring and heavy laden"? Yes, if we take the words, as they surely ought to be taken, in a spiritual sense. There is no toil so arduous as the quest of the *summum bonum* when carried on in the spirit of a Paul or a Buddha, and no burden so heavy as that of the heart which has long sought and not yet found it. Those who have passed through the experience know the truth of this statement, though to others it may seem a great exaggeration. Christ comprehended the labour and the burden, and pitied the sufferer, and yearned to give him relief. Let us not be deceived by the simple terms in which He addresses him into the prosaic idea that it is purely physical toil and weariness He has in view, and that in a spirit of disgusted reaction He turns from the disdainful scribe to the illiterate peasant for satisfying discipleship. Bodily labour and fatigue simply serve the purpose of an emblem. The toil present to His mind is not that which has for its object the meat that perisheth, but that which has for its aim the meat that endureth unto everlasting life. So understood, the words of Jesus necessarily point to the highest type of religious experience, that which is heroic in effort and temper and tragic in career. Nothing short of that deserves to be so characterised. Feeble desire for the eternal is not labour, and failure to obtain the object of such desire is no burden.

When we know who are meant by the "labouring and heavy laden" we understand why Jesus describes Himself as "meek and lowly in heart." Till we per-

ceive who are addressed, we fail to discern any fitness in the allusion. Might not the Teacher with equal appropriateness have specified some other characteristics? Probably many a student of the Gospels, while drawn to this oracle by its inexpressible charm, has had such a feeling, though hardly willing to avow it to himself. The feeling disappears when we have defined the ideal disciple. The underlying thought is then seen to be that the moods of Master and scholar correspond. The weary seeker after wisdom, or the knowledge of the Highest Good, is meek and lowly. He is as one whose heart has been broken and his spirit bruised. His heart is not haughty, nor his eyes lofty. His soul is even as a weaned child. He needs one who can speak tenderly as well as wisely, fully acquainted with his case, and sympathetic in his attitude towards both his aspirations and his disappointments. As such an one Jesus offers Himself. To the labouring and heavy laden He in effect says: "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." And how has He acquired this supreme talent? By an experience of disappointment answering to that of those whom He invites to His school. They have been disappointed in their teachers, He has been disappointed in His scholars. In synagogue and street crowd, among the disciples of the Rabbis, and even in His own disciple-circle, His experience has been disenchanting: limited receptivity at the best, not infrequently a total lack of receptivity. So the ideal disciple and He need one another, and suit one another. He needs them to fill

His teacher's heart, they need Him to satisfy the hunger of their souls. And there is mutual sympathy as well as mutual need. Similarity in experience has produced congeniality of temper.

When such a Teacher and such scholars meet, one can predict what will happen. They will find solace in each other's company. Of that also Jesus speaks, though only on one side of the joint experience. Of the solace the disciple will bring to Him, He makes no mention; but to the solace He will communicate He does refer in these words: "And ye shall find rest to your souls." There will be at least the rest that comes from the sense of being perfectly understood and fully sympathised with. But that is not all that is needed. There must be instruction as well as sympathy. The Teacher must be able to give what the scholar has hitherto sought in vain: a word of eternal life that shall bring contentment to the whole inner being—mind, heart, conscience. Jesus recognises this when He speaks of His "yoke." The taking of the yoke means coming to His school, and the invitation to come is an acknowledgment of obligation on His part to perform the Teacher's *rôle*. He must teach, and teach satisfactorily, so that the pupil shall not need to leave Him, as he has left others, and go in quest of a new teacher. And accordingly He promises satisfaction by characterising His yoke as "easy." A teacher's yoke is easy when his doctrine commends itself to reason and conscience. An easy yoke does not necessarily imply a low, accommodating ideal of life. On the contrary, the teacher's ideal may be lofty, exacting, apparently

unattainable, yet the reverse of burdensome because sweetly reasonable and true to the deepest instincts of the soul. Such, as we shall see, was the moral ideal of Jesus as set forth in His recorded words: high and difficult, yet not grievous; awakening enthusiasm, therefore no burden to the spirit. What a contrast to the yoke of the Rabbis!

In the light of the foregoing interpretation of Christ's statement concerning Himself, we can see clearly how feeble is the argument which has been based upon it against the authenticity of the saying "Come unto Me." Christ, it is argued, could not have said "I am meek and lowly" just because He was meek and lowly. Self-eulogy, even in soliloquy, is incompatible with humility.[1] Various things might be said in reply to this ethical canon of criticism. But the simplest way to dispose of it is to point out that what we have in the words objected to is, properly speaking, not self-eulogy but self-description. They describe a *mood* rather than lay claim to a *virtue*. If it was not egotism in the prophet to represent himself as one whom God had trained to speak a word in season to him that was weary, as little was it egotism in Jesus to use a form of words which in effect means the same thing. If a Psalmist in the Divine Presence might say, "My heart is not haughty," why might not Jesus say "I am meek and lowly" without prejudice to His humility? Prophet, Psalmist, and Jesus all speak out of the same mood, not in a spirit of boasting, rather in a tone of self-humiliation. Their utterances

[1] So in substance Martineau. *Vide* my *Apologetics*, p. 364.

are the devout breathings of a broken and contrite heart too familiar with the vanity of life while still able to hope in God.

The view here presented as to the import of the saying "Come unto Me," and the mood which it expresses, helps us moreover to understand its omission by Luke, assuming that he was not unacquainted with it, but knew perfectly well that it formed a part of a larger whole, the former portion of which he has preserved. We have seen that it is the way of this Evangelist to exercise editorial discretion in reference to whatever affects the character of the Lord Jesus or of His apostles, omitting, pruning, strongly stating, as the case might require. This idiosyncrasy comes into play here, giving rise to modification of what has been retained, and to the omission of what could not be modified. The modification consists in the altered mood out of which the utterance is made to spring. In Luke's account Jesus speaks at a moment of exulting gladness, occasioned by the glowing reports of the Seventy just returned from their evangelistic mission.[1] The historical setting there assigned to the devotional outpouring is intrinsically improbable as compared to that given to it in Matthew, and the exultant mood ascribed to Jesus is hardly what we should have expected from Him even in such a connection as Luke's narrative postulates. That the great Master had already found His own ministry disappointing is beyond doubt. Is it likely that the results of the minor efforts of the Twelve or of the Seventy, however gratifying so far

[1] *Luke* x. 17–22.

as they went, would move him to ecstatic joy, and to passionate outpouring of His soul in devout thanksgiving? The situation and the mood, as conceived by Luke, are wholly inadequate to the quality of the utterance. It is another instance illustrating his inability to do justice to the tragic element in our Lord's character and experience.

The omission of the second part is due in some measure to the same inability. Luke apparently did not know what to make of it. He felt instinctively that it did not fit in to the supposed situation and mood. Two things would give him this feeling: the unmistakable tone of sadness pervading the words, and the description of the persons addressed as labouring and heavy laden. "I am meek and lowly in heart." Luke understood better than some modern critics that these words were the description of a mood, not a piece of self-eulogy; and taking them so, he perceived their unsuitableness to a moment of triumphant gladness. That was one reason for omission. Another was the inapplicability of the epithets "labouring and heavy laden" to the case of the Seventy or the Twelve. There need, indeed, have been no difficulty on that score if the words, as Resch supposes,[1] referred to the fatigue connected with the recent mission, and, as employed by Jesus, meant: Come, ye tired and weary Evangelists, and I will give you a recreative holiday. But I do not think it possible that an idea so utterly prosaic could ever have entered

[1] In his recent work on *The Extra-canonical Parallels to Matthew and Mark*, p. 132.

Luke's head. He knew enough of Christ's intellectual habitudes to be aware that the labour and the burden must be symbols of spiritual experiences. And just there lay his perplexity. He could not imagine the members of the disciple-circle as the subjects of any such experiences. Were they not rather happy men in possession of enviable privileges and powers? Why should they be asked to come to Christ's school? Had they not been there for some time already, and had they not made some progress in the lore which brought light and peace and contentment to the spirit? There was nothing for it but to omit the words so long as they were supposed to refer to the disciple-circle. They might have been preserved as words spoken to other persons, as expressing a desire for a discipleship of a more radical and satisfying character. But that course was not open to Luke, who was ever anxious to spare the Twelve. So viewed, the "Come unto Me" would indicate dissatisfaction with all actual disciples; therefore, even with them. Words bearing such a meaning Luke would certainly not report.

Yet one other argument against the authenticity of this famous saying remains to be disposed of; that, viz., based on an alleged literary resemblance between it and *the Prayer of Jesus the Son of Sirach*, in the last chapter of the Old Testament Apocryphal book which bears the name of the *Wisdom of Sirach*. That a certain resemblance does exist, I am not disposed to deny. There is just enough to have led me years ago, in reading the book, to note in the margin a reference to Matthew xi. 28–30. It will be best to reproduce the

passage in which the likeness appears, so that readers may judge for themselves. In the version of the Apocrypha, recently published by the Revisers of the Authorised Version of the Old and New Testaments, it stands thus:

Chap. li. 23. *Draw near unto me*, ye unlearned, and lodge in the house of instruction.
24. Say wherefore are ye lacking in these things, and your souls are very thirsty.
25. I opened my mouth and spake: get her for yourselves without money.
26. *Put your neck under the yoke and let your soul receive instruction;* she is hard at hand to find.
27. Behold with your eyes how that I laboured but a little and found for myself *much rest.*
28. Get you instruction with a great sum of silver and gain much gold by her.
29. May your soul rejoice in His mercy, and may ye not be put to shame in praising Him.
30. Work your work before the time cometh, and in His time He will give you your reward.

The resemblance is in the passages I have marked in italics, and it is real so far as it goes. Far from wishing to deny this, I am rather tempted to exaggerate

the extent of the likeness, because if it were certain that the author of the words in the Gospel, whoever he was, had the Prayer of the Son of Sirach in his view, an argument might thence be drawn for the unity of the whole passage (Matt. xi. 25–30). For Sirach's prayer, like this evangelic section, begins with a prayer and ends with an invitation, and the first word of both prayers is the same.[1] If the utterance of the later Jesus be a composition based on the devout outpouring of the earlier, then Matthew has preserved the whole of it and Luke has given only a fragment. It is worth noting a literary affinity which has any chance of yielding so satisfactory a result. But it may be feared that what we gain in one direction we lose in another. In other words, the question readily suggests itself, Does the literary affinity, once recognised, not compel the admission that Matthew xi. 25–30 is not a genuine utterance of our Lord, but a composition by the Evangelist, or by some one from whom he has borrowed? Without hesitation I say, by no means. Why should not the resemblance in question be the result of an acquaintance on the part of Jesus Himself with the *Wisdom of Sirach*, an acquaintance dating possibly from boyhood, and leaving its traces in phrases which perhaps unconsciously colour the style of His address to ideal disciples? How far, as a matter of fact, acquaintance with an Apocryphal book such as Sirach was likely to be possessed by non-professional Galileans in the time of Christ, I do not know. But on the

[1] "I will give thanks to Thee," in Sirach; "I thank Thee," in the Gospel.

hypothesis we are considering, some one belonging to the early Christian Church knew the book; and if that was possible for him, why not also for Jesus? And if the book was within His reach, I do not think He would have any scruple about perusing it. He might read it as a good book though not canonical; and though abstaining in the time of His public ministry from citing it as authoritative Scripture, He might not think it necessary to be anxiously on His guard against allowing its phrases to find an occasional faint echo in His own style.

All this is merely hypothetical reasoning. Whether the resemblance between the two devotional utterances be more than an accident, I am not prepared confidently to determine. It is so slight that it might quite well be an utterly undesigned coincidence. It concerns the expression chiefly, hardly at all the thought, in respect of which the utterance of the Lord is incomparably superior. Even in the matter of style the words of the earlier Jesus are poor by comparison. How artificial and stilted its diction compared with the simplicity, felicity, and spontaneity of the "Come unto Me"! This has taken its place among the golden words of the religious literature of mankind. The "Draw near unto me" of Sirach has nothing in it to insure even temporary fame, not to speak of immortality. It is redolent of the lamp rather than of Divine inspiration. I owe an apology to devout Christian people for placing the two prayers side by side even for a moment. My excuse must be that modern critics have compelled me.

The unity of Matthew xi. 25–30 justifies an important inference as to the central truth the great Master is to communicate to His ideal disciples. It is that God is a Father. In the first part of the devotional soliloquy He has spoken of that truth as a secret which it is His exclusive prerogative to reveal. It must be supposed to be present to His mind when He proceeds to invite the labouring and heavy laden. That truth He will be pleased to reveal to them. The revelation He expects to give them deep satisfaction. As the Revealer of that truth, they will recognise in Him a Teacher standing in sharp contrast to their other masters, and One whose yoke is easy because the truth He teaches sets free from everything in religion that imposes fetters on the spirit. Nothing but a true doctrine of God can meet the requirements of the case. The vital thing in religion and in life is how we conceive God. On the idea we cherish of the Divine Being it depends whether our religion is to be a bane or a blessing, emancipating or enslaving, in moral tendency elevating or degrading. Come then to Christ's school, all ye who desire the true knowledge of God. Learn of Him how to think of God, man and their relations. His doctrine solves all vital problems: the problems of past sin, of present duty, and of future destiny.

CHAPTER VII

THE ESCAPES OF JESUS

OUR main source of information for what I venture to call the *Escapes of Jesus* is Mark's Gospel. The narrative of the second Evangelist contains sundry intimations of the desire of our Lord to get away from crowds into retreats where quiet intercourse with His disciples was possible. For hints are not wanting that this was the leading aim of these acts of retirement. As a sample may be cited these words: "They departed thence and passed through Galilee, and He would not that any man should know it, for He was teaching His disciples."[1] Of the instruction communicated to the Twelve, Mark has preserved comparatively little, but he more than any other of the Evangelists has made apparent how much they needed it. One of his realistic touches is a question he represents the Master as addressing to His disciples: How do ye not understand?[2] The disappointment bordering on impatience to which that question gave occasional expression was, it is to be feared, a chronic feeling in Christ's mind in reference to the men whom He had chosen. They were far enough from being

[1] *Mark* ix. 30, 31. [2] *Mark* viii. 21.

ideal scholars, and Mark of all the Evangelists takes least pains to hide the fact. That they did not understand is patent in his pages, and that their Master sought opportunities for dispelling their ignorance is equally so. Thus witness is indirectly borne in this Gospel to extensive instruction, unreported in its pages, which we are prepared to find in fuller reports of our Lord's ministry. It is noticeable that Mark, as if conscious of the defect of his Gospel on the didactic side, tries to compensate for the lack of detail by general statements as to activity in teaching where Matthew, *e.g.*, strong in the didactic element, represents our Lord as occupied in a healing ministry. Instances may be found in Mark x. 1., xi. 18, compared with Matthew xix. 2, xxi. 14.

The escapes of Jesus took place in all directions possible for one whose work had for its geographical area the western margin of the sea of Galilee. He might retreat to the hill country behind, or to the eastern shore of the lake, or to the northern borderland. He made His escape successively in each of these directions; first once to the Hill, then twice to the eastern shore, then twice (apparently) northwards, making five attempts in all to withdraw into congenial solitude. The first three were escapes from the people gathered in immense crowds; the last two were escapes not entirely from the people but also from their religious leaders.

1. *The Escape to the Hill.* — "He goeth up into the mountain."[1] That this movement was of the nature

[1] *Mark* iii. 13.

of an escape becomes clear when we attentively consider all the circumstances. Very significant in the first place is the fact stated just before, that Jesus instructed His disciples to have a boat waiting "because of the crowd, lest they should throng Him."[1] A boat of course could be of no use for an ascent to the hill-tops, but the point to be noted is the desire and intention to escape somehow, and in some direction when the crowd became inconveniently large and eager. Such a crowd, it is next to be observed, had gathered around Jesus at the time when He made the ascent; a motley company of diseased persons, elbowing their way towards Him and pressing in upon Him from every side, that they might touch His body and so get rid — as they hoped — of their ailments; while demoniacs on their knees screamed in hideous chorus: "Thou art the Son of God." It was a disorderly scramble for a cure threatening danger to the person of the Healer, and distasteful to His spirit through the superstition it revealed; and it is no wonder that with all His "enthusiasm of humanity" He wished Himself well out of it. The ascent of the mountain was the expedient He adopted for self-extrication; and the next significant circumstance to be noted is that He goes not alone, but accompanied by a band of men, whom, in a manner not indicated, He picks out of the crowd, to serve as a kind of body-guard. They are doubtless chosen with an eye, not merely to this immediate service of protection, but to prospective discipleship, — a first selection out of which,

[1] *Mark* iii. 9.

after due acquaintance in the hill retreat, a second will be made, sufficient with those previously called to make up the inner circle of the Twelve. But a defence against the mob they are meant in the first place to be, so implying a resolute purpose to secure for a season relief from an overwhelming embarrassing popularity. That the device succeeded appears from the fact that the multitude is represented as reassembling on learning that Jesus had descended from the mountain. They had not followed, they had dispersed to their homes, but on the report spreading "He is back again," the scarcely lulled enthusiasm easily revived.

How was Jesus occupied on the hill-top? Mark is silent on the point, but one cannot hesitate as to the answer. What could He be doing but teaching His disciples, considering their need of instruction, the extreme difficulty of finding leisure for this important work, and the welcome recreation that would come from so congenial a change of occupation? And seeing that the ascent of the mountain was of the nature of an escape from a too importunate crowd, the probability is that the sojourn up there was prolonged so as to give time for the vast gathering to disperse, and lasted for at least some days, during which a considerable body of instruction could be given in separate lessons, each day having its own theme. In short, all points to this as the occasion on which the so-called "Sermon on the Mount" was delivered. That sermon, as reported in Matthew, is probably the summary of a week's instruction in a summer school at which the

recently selected body of disciples, including the Twelve, were the audience. Instead of the "Sermon on the Mount" it might, as suggested in the first chapter, be more appropriately called the *Teaching on the Hill.* For it is teaching, not preaching, and the persons addressed are not a large miscellaneous crowd, but a select band of men with some aptitude for disciple-lore. This distinction between sermon and teaching, people and disciples, while not without justification in Matthew's narrative, is by no means firmly adhered to there, and all traces of it have disappeared in Luke's version, where the famous discourse of our Lord assumes the character of an address to a large assembly such as that from which in Mark's narrative He is represented as making His escape. Yet the circumstances as described in the Second Gospel, the probability that the ascent there mentioned was the occasion on which the discourse was delivered, and, last but not least, the nature of its contents, compel the conclusion that a limited body of disciples, not a miscellaneous assembly, constituted the audience.

Why has Mark not reported any of that memorable Teaching? Possibly because he was not able. Such a body of deep thought could not be treasured up for long years in the memory of any disciple, however attentive or intelligent; therefore Peter, Mark's apostolic source, could not repeat it from memory in his preaching. In all probability it would have been lost to the world unless some disciple, Matthew, *e.g.*, had made written memoranda at the time. These memoranda, we must suppose, found a place in the *Oracles*

of the Lord, which, according to Papias, that disciple compiled, and thence passed in diverse versions to the pages of our First and Third Gospels. But why could not Mark also have got them from the same source? Probably for the simple reason that he did not know it. The contrary view indeed has been very confidently maintained by some scholars, very specially by Dr. Bernhard Weiss. While acknowledging the ingenuity of that able theologian's reasoning, I think the point very doubtful; and one of my reasons for doing so is just this, that Mark is so utterly silent about the Teaching on the Hill.

2. *The first Escape over the Lake to the Eastern Shore.* — This took place according to Mark on the day of the Parabolic Discourse, and that it was indeed of the nature of an escape is very clear from his narrative. On the same day, at eventide, when He had ended his address from the boat to the vast multitude on the shore, Jesus abruptly says to His disciples: "Let us cross over to the other side."[1] Whereupon, leaving the multitude where they were (not "sending them away," as the Authorised Version has it), the disciples take Him as He was, *i.e.*, without delay and without any preparations for a journey, along with them in the boat eastward as directed.[2] It was an escape along the only possible line of retreat, landing on the western shore being impossible, owing to the vastness of the crowd. To get away even seawards was not easy, other boats having gathered around that in which Jesus was, full of people eager to get near the Speaker that

[1] *Mark* iv. 35. [2] *Mark* iv. 36.

they might hear Him distinctly.[1] These apparently trivial particulars, as given in the Second Gospel, are obviously realistic reminiscences of an eye-witness, and when duly considered call up a vivid picture of the situation. Jesus, weary with talking, and with the excitement of a great assembly (so weary that He falls asleep as soon as the boat begins to move), desires quiet and rest, and at a glance perceives that there is only one way of obtaining them, and gives orders accordingly. His disciples, gathering His wish from word, tone, and gesture, with the promptitude of experts move off at once, without a thought of where precisely they are going, or what is to be done in the matter of food and lodgings. Possibly their impression is that the voyage eastwards is simply a roundabout way of getting to the western shore, and so home, after the people have dispersed in the evening twilight. In that case the movement would have been simply an escape without an ulterior object. But it is probable that Jesus had more in view, — the obtainment of a time of leisure in a region where He was unknown, during which He might discuss with the disciples the incidents of the day and the lessons to be gathered from them. For the parabolic discourse, and especially the utterance of the Parable of the Sower, was an important event which meant much for the people, for Jesus, and for the Twelve.

From all the synoptical accounts it is clear that the parabolic discourse, and especially the main parable, formed the subject of a conversation between Jesus and

[1] *Mark* iv. 36.

His disciples. Over the time, the place, and the precise details of the conversation, a certain amount of obscurity hangs, but some points are clear: that the disciples desired to know why their Master had spoken to the people so, that He gave them explanations on that point, and that He further took pains to impress on them their responsibilities as disciples.[1]

As to the first, what the Twelve desired to know was probably, not why their Master spoke to the people in parables, but why He spoke to them in such parables. That He spoke to them in parables could be no surprise, for He had been doing that all along, in every synagogue, and wayside discourse. But in parables like the Sower, there was, the disciples felt, a new element: a tone of disappointment audible, a spirit of criticism unmistakable. They perceived of course that these critical parables grew out of the Master's preaching experience, and at bottom what they wanted to know was, why He was dissatisfied. And His reply in substance was that for various reasons hinted at in the Sower, and further explained afterwards, in very many cases His efforts had been vain. The word had not fructified, the hearer had not heard to profit.

From reflections on this depressing topic the transition would be easy to the subject of disciple-responsibility. The moral of the parable-discourse so far as the Twelve were concerned was: if the word fail of effect in so many instances, see that there be no failure in your case. The Master was saying to them indi-

[1] *Vide Mark* iv. 10–25.

rectly: you are my hope; you specially, if not exclusively, are my good soil, soft, deep and clean; see that ye bring forth fruit abundant and mature. This He said to them directly afterwards in private intercourse, when He exhorted them to take heed how they heard so that they might understand, indicated that intelligence would be in proportion to attention, and imposed on them the duty of communicating knowledge thus attained; in parabolic language the duty of placing the lamp on the stand.[1] By the choice parable of the Blade, the Ear and the Ripe Corn,[2] He gave them to understand that He did not expect them to realise His ideal in a day. He would give them time, and be content if they brought forth the ripe fruit of their schooling eventually as the result of a law of gradual growth.

3. The next Escape also took the shape of a voyage across the lake, this time in a north-easterly direction. It occured shortly after the return of the Twelve from their house-mission in Galilee.[3] Its character as an escape is distinctly revealed in the terms in which the proposal was introduced by Jesus. Its ostensible aim, as therein represented, was to secure an interval of rest for the disciples; not, as one might naturally imagine, from the fatigues of the mission, but from the incessant demands created by a constant stream of people coming and going, not leaving even so much leisure as was needful for taking food.[4] The attempt to get away from the excited crowd in this case, as in the former, proved a

[1] *Mark* iv. 21-25.
[2] *Mark* iv. 26-29.
[3] *Mark* vi. 30, 31.
[4] *Mark* vi. 31.

failure, though not for the same reason. In the former instance the plan was frustrated through an unexpected encounter with a madman; this time defeat was due to the enthusiasm of a multitude determined not to be baulked, who, observing that the Master and His disciples were making for the head of the lake, started off at a run and made such speed as to be on the ground before them.[1] In both cases Jesus had to do what He had not intended — perform a wonderful work: on the earlier occasion curing a demoniac who imagined himself possessed by a legion of devils, on the later feeding thousands of hungry people in a desert.

There is a mystery about this third flight from the people. One cannot but suspect that more than mere physical rest was aimed at. What was the meaning of sending the Twelve away *alone*, after the feeding, back to the western shore?[2] It looks as if there was something going on which made their absence desirable. And what did that coming and going of the people on the other side, before the eastward voyage, signify? No mention is made of sick being brought to be healed. Something else seems to be in the people's mind for the moment. What can it be? The Fourth Gospel here gives us a clue in the remarkable statement that the people whom Jesus fed in the desert desired per force to make Him a King.[3] If that was really the fact, the idea did not come into their heads then for the first time. The project then only reached its crisis. That was what the coming and going had been about, and it was to the *disciples* rather than to the

[1] *Mark* vi. 33. [2] *Mark* vi. 45. [3] *John* vi. 15.

Master that the stream of visitors came, finding them not unsympathetic. The movement, congenial to the spirit of Galileans and too easily put into their minds, may have sprung out of the house-mission. The Twelve had been only too successful. They had talked about the Kingdom and this was what came of it — a political scheme. Wild as it may seem to us, it would appear perfectly natural to them. What was to be the issue of that immense enthusiasm? Was it to end in smoke? Was not the inevitable consummation to make the marvellous Teacher and Healer the actual head of a reformed state?

No better explanation can be given of Christ's manifest desire to separate His disciples from the people than the supposition that the Galileans entertained such a project, and that the Twelve more or less sympathised with it, at the time of their return from their mission. Assuming this to be the fact we understand what kind of "rest" was aimed at. It was above all rest from *illusions*, from the fever of false, foolish enthusiasms, from mental excitement over a fond scheme which, if not resolutely opposed, would end in disaster. Such rest Jesus must at all hazards secure for His disciples if they are to be of any use to Him, to help and not frustrate His plans. The time has come when the question, Whither? must be dealt with. The Master knows the true answer to the question, but the disciples do not. A false issue is in their view. The first thing to be done therefore is peremptorily to negate the issue they contemplate. To accomplish this was the real motive of the voyage towards the north-eastern shore.

The next task will be to make known the true issue. To secure leisure for explanations on this momentous topic was a leading motive for the two flights remaining to be mentioned.

4. *The Escape in the Direction of Tyre and Sidon.*[1]— Some Biblical scholars are of opinion that there was only one excursion to the northern confines of Palestine which in the Gospel narratives has, through some confusion in the tradition, got broken up into two: a longer one into the territories of Tyre and Sidon, and a later, shorter one to the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi. This question may be left on one side, all the more that, even if there were, as I believe, two distinct journeys, they were one in general aim. The common purpose of both was to get away for a season, completely and securely, at once from enthusiastic but foolish crowds, from well-meant but futile political plots, and from the recently manifested ill-will of religious leaders more to be feared than anything,[2] that in solitude and silence Jesus might brace His own spirit for the fatal crisis which from concurrent signs He knew to be approaching, and at the same time prepare His disciples for an issue of which they little dreamt. That He went so far away, this time, needs no explanation. The reason simply was that not otherwise could He attain His end. The previous attempt to escape had failed because the place of retreat was too near the scenes of labour. The new movement of retirement

[1] *Mark* vii. 24.

[2] *Vide* the encounter between Jesus and the scribes in reference to washing of hands in *Matthew* xv. 1-20; *Mark* vii. 1-22.

therefore must be towards regions so remote that pursuit was not to be apprehended. And it must be northwards, not southwards, for geographical and for moral reasons. The northern boundary lay nearest Galilee, and the time had not come for the southern journey. Jesus will go to Jerusalem to *die;* He must go to the North to *prepare* to die.

The first of the two northerly excursions seems to have been of considerable extent. Mark names in connection with it Tyre, Sidon, *Decapolis*, and the sea of Galilee. Connecting these points we get a journey, first northwards to and through the above named maritime countries, then eastwards over the Lebanon range to the neighbourhood of Damascus,[1] then southwards and westwards through the region of the ten cities, and finally over the Jordan and back through Galilee to the original point of departure. If this was the route it would occupy a considerable time. How were the days of that eventful pilgrimage filled up? The Gospel records here are very meagre. Mark tells us most, but even he reports only a couple of incidents: the encounter with the woman of Canaan, and the cure of a deaf-mute, apparently at some point on the route through Decapolis. In both cases he takes pains to show how much Jesus desired privacy. In connection with the earlier incident he remarks that Jesus "would have no man know," where He was,[2] and in connection with the later he carefully notes that Jesus took the deaf-mute "aside from the multitude privately," and after the

[1] Pliny includes Damascus in Decapolis (H. N. Cap. V. 16).

[2] *Mark* vii. 24.

cure, charged all who witnessed it to "tell no man."[1] The second Evangelist stands alone in the emphasis with which he brings out this fact in reference to the later period of our Lord's life, though even he fails to explain fully its rationale. That happily, with due reflection on the data supplied, we are able to do for ourselves.

Both the incidents reported by Mark possess their own distinctive points of interest. The prominent feature in the earlier occurrence is the seeming reluctance of Jesus to grant the succour craved by a distressed mother for her suffering daughter. In the later, while still bent on privacy, He made no objection to working the cure asked, though in this case also the sufferer was not improbably a Gentile. What did that reluctance mean? In Matthew's narrative Jesus is reported to have pled as an excuse for it that His Mission was to the lost sheep of Israel. The plea might have provoked the rejoinder, Why then are you here? Israel's Saviour a fugitive from Israel's land! Perhaps that was just what Jesus Himself was thinking of at the moment, and also what He wished His disciples to reflect on. His position as a fugitive was fitted of itself to raise in His mind the question as to the ultimate destination of His Gospel. In the circumstances the coincidence of the Syrophenician woman's request, in spite of His desire to remain unknown, would readily assume the significance of an omen. An isolated case might thus be transformed into a representative instance, the whole Gentile world in the person of that Syrian mother saying in beseeching tones: Come over and help us! On

[1] *Mark* vii. 33, 36.

that hypothesis the reluctance to heal becomes very intelligible. In other circumstances Jesus might have granted the request without hesitation and without remark, viewing the case as a mere exception involving no principle. But in the actual situation He has to realise for Himself the serious import of what He is asked to do, and also if possible make it apparent to His disciples. To Himself He has to say: My Mission was to Israel, is this a new call? To His disciples: You sympathised with the wish of the Galileans to make me King of a reformed Israel; do you know what the request of this woman which you seem inclined to back really signifies? It portends the transference of the Kingdom of God from Jewish to Gentile soil. What Jesus said to the woman may be interpreted in the light of the same hypothesis. "It is not permissible, or it is not meet, to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs," said He with apparent harshness. Had she known the whole facts of the case she might have replied: True Master, but have the children not already got their bread, and have they not themselves thrown it to the dogs? Is that not the reason of your being here? That would have been an argument difficult to answer; yet her actual reply to Christ's objection served her purpose even better, revealing as it did a humble faith which went straight to His heart and suggested the thought: The Pagans after all not dogs but children.

Jesus, it seems to me, used the case of the Syrophenician woman to give His disciples an object-lesson *on the claims of the Gentile world.* And the whole of that

circular journey in Gentile lands would be an education to them on that subject, and probably was intended by their Master to serve that purpose. What He said to them we know not, but we can conceive what the world itself would say. "The sun shines here as well as in Galilee; why may not the gracious love of the Father in heaven be here also?" Or was that too abstruse a lesson in theology for them as yet to comprehend?

The leading feature in the later incident of this journey is the curious details regarding the manner in which our Lord effected the cure of the deaf-mute. These are probably not to be regarded as an indication of Christ's habitual method of working cures, but rather as something peculiar to the individual case, and on that account deemed worthy of note by the Evangelist, or the original reporter. The acts specified, putting a finger into each ear, and touching the tongue, were not means but symbols of cure; and perhaps we should find in their use on this occasion a hint that the disease itself had for the mind of the healer a symbolic significance: physical deafness and dumbness an emblem of the spiritual condition of Israel, or possibly of the Gentile world. Thus may be explained the sigh which Jesus heaved in working the cure. It was a sigh not over the physical malady of an individual, but over the spiritual malady of a people, in Israel's case, alas, not curable.

5. *The Escape towards Cæsarea Philippi.*[1] — The

[1] *Matthew* xvi. 13; *Mark* viii. 27; *Luke* ix. 18. There is no indication of locality in Luke.

immediate occasion of this new journey towards the north was the demand for a sign on the part of the Pharisees, which to our Lord appeared a thing of very evil omen.[1] As to its pædagogic purpose in reference to the disciples there is no room for doubt. If on the earlier journey, by the way of Tyre, Sidon, and Decapolis, Jesus sought to familiarise His disciples with the thought that the Kingdom for whose coming they ardently longed might eventually pass away from Israel, during this later one His aim was to initiate them into the mystery of His own ignominious fate. The two subjects were closely connected. The events involved were related to each other as cause and effect. The rejection of Jesus would have for its necessary consequence the forfeiture by Israel of her privilege, the passing of the vineyard into other hands. Logically, therefore, the fate awaiting their Master should have been the first subject of instruction for the disciples. But it was by far the harder theme, therefore it formed the subject of the later lesson. It was a wide theme, with many aspects, as well as a hard one, and there is ground for believing that during the weeks taken up with the Cæsarea excursion, it formed the leading topic of many an earnest conversation. With reference to a certain stage of the journey, Mark states that Jesus was teaching His disciples and was saying to them: The Son of man is delivered up into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him.[2] There was not merely an

[1] *Matt.* xvi. 1; *Mark* viii. 11.

[2] *Mark* ix. 31. The verbs represented in English by "was teaching" and "was saying" are in the imperfect, implying continuous action.

announcement, but a course of instruction. The fact was stated again and again, and made the subject of explanatory discourse in which it was pointed out what causes were at work inevitably leading up to such a catastrophe, and how well the event predicted would correspond with Old Testament prophetic anticipations. The leaven of the scribes of which the Master had bid His disciples beware,[1] would afford matter for much talk, as supplying in its evil nature a sufficient answer to the question, Why take so gloomy a view of the future? And the prophetic delineations of the sufferings of God's servants would receive their due share of attention, as showing how likely moral fidelity and tribulation are to go together in this world. No fear of conversation flagging in the Jesus-circle in those eventful weeks.

The subject was first introduced on the way northwards towards Cæsarea Philippi[2] and very appositely by a question which had, and was probably intended to have, the effect of eliciting from the disciples a declaration of their faith in the Messiahship of their Master. This faith was not the birth of the moment; it was really involved in the sympathy evinced by the disciples with the project to make Jesus King. Jesus desired now to draw them into a confession of their faith, that He might set it in a new order of ideas. Hitherto their logical position has been: the Christ (shown to be such by word, deed, and spirit), therefore worthy to be Israel's glorious crowned King. The

[1] *Matt.* xvi. 6; *Mark* viii. 15.
[2] *Mark* viii. 27.

logic of the scribes on the contrary has been: deserving by his conduct to die, therefore his Christhood incredible. Jesus wishes His disciples to know that neither their logic nor that of the scribes is sound, and that the truth lies in the antinomy: the Christ, yet doomed to an ignominious death. What an abstruse lesson for these poor fishermen and publicans! No wonder they kicked against the goad. But there was no help for it. Both members of the antinomy were true, and neither could be seen in its full truth except in company with the other. What a tragic event the death of Jesus became when it was seen to be the death of a *Messiah*, and what a fierce light was thrown on the nature of Messianic dignities and functions when it was made clear that the destiny of a true Christ is to be crucified by and for the world! It is not surprising that Jesus took great pains to indoctrinate His followers in these high matters, making them the absorbing theme of conversation from this time onward. Only by much iteration could they be made intelligible. After all His pains, the disciples had not learnt their lesson when the end came. But one thing they did understand then: that what *had* happened was what their Master had again and again said *would* happen; and this helped to bring them safely through the crisis.

CHAPTER VIII

YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN

WE return to the first Escape and to the *Teaching on the Hill.* Up there on the mountain-top Jesus is alone with His chosen disciples, enjoying a welcome season of recreation away from the sweltering heat and the crowds of the lake-margin, and finding rest in a change of occupation. The Preacher and Healer now becomes the Teacher, initiating His scholars into the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. Heaven's peace reigns in the hearts of Master and scholars alike, the while. It is for all a sacred blessed holiday. The holiday mood is traceable throughout the recorded sayings of the Master during this season of repose; the tranquillity of the uplands, the neighbourhood of the skies. In some parts of the discourse especially, *e.g.*, the Beatitudes and the admonition against care, there is a divine simplicity, a lyric beauty, a light-hearted buoyancy that charm us, and tend for the moment to transform us into citizens of the Kingdom, and elevate us into the upper regions of celestial tranquillity. Here we have a chance of seeing into the very heart of Jesus. Of course it is but a glimpse that is now attainable. For an elaborate study of the Teaching on the Hill, this is

not the place. But we may form a slight acquaintance with the Master's thoughts concerning God, man, and the true life of man. The first of these three related topics will engage our attention in this chapter.

Christ introduced into the language of religion a way of speaking concerning God which was new, if not absolutely, at least in emphasis and import. He called God *Father*. "Your Father which is in heaven." But He did not, as perhaps we might have wished, offer any formal definition of the sense in which He used the name. He defined simply by *discriminating use*, employing the name in connections of thought which invested it with special significance. He used the title in this way sufficiently often to invest it for the minds of His disciples with a rich net-work of associated qualities furnishing a firm support to religious faith, and a powerful stimulus to right conduct. It occurs some fifteen times in the "Sermon on the Mount" as reported by Matthew, so that by the end of the Sermon, hearers must have come to the conclusion that the Speaker did not employ the term "Father" mechanically as a customary expression, but of set purpose and with conscious deliberate preference. It would be instructive to study exhaustively the settings of the name in the various places where it occurs. This cannot be done now. It must suffice to indicate briefly what can be learned concerning the Father in heaven from the most representative texts.

Two very outstanding texts occur in the fifth Chapter, verses 16 and 45. In both the name is introduced

to suggest a motive to conduct inculcated upon disciples. "Let your light shine" because thereby your Father will be glorified. "Love your enemies" because by so doing you will be like your Father, who blesses all, evil and good, just and unjust. In this use of the name the nature of the Divine Fatherhood is supposed to be known. But the same texts may be utilised as an aid to the better knowledge of the Fatherhood. While the name suggests the motives, the motives in turn throw light on the name. It is the light so thrown we are concerned with now.

In the first of the two texts the motive suggested implies that God values the honour brought to Him by those who let their light shine. No man can act on the motive unless he believes that God is not a being indifferent to conduct, but rather one who takes an earnest interest in the moral behaviour of men. This then is one thing Jesus would teach when He calls God Father. It is His fundamental lesson connected with His first recorded use of the name in His public ministry. He says in effect: "God is your Father, you are His sons, and your Father would have you behave worthily as His sons. He taketh pleasure in such behaviour not merely because of the honour it brings to Him through its influence on the minds of other men, but for its own sake. His eye rests with complacency on all who acquit themselves in the world as true children of God." This doctrine is consonant to the relation between father and son. A father expects honour from a son and is deeply disappointed when he

does not receive it. "If I be a Father where is mine honour."[1] And the honour every right-minded father most values is right conduct. Filial courtesies are well in their way, but it is *character*, a life true, pure, earnest, manly, noble, that can alone satisfy the paternal heart. Of a son living such a life, every father worthy of the name is proud.

To this statement the Father in heaven is no exception. He delights in all who in the sense of the Preacher let their light shine. Who then are they? They are men of heroic temper; men who love truth with passion and will speak it, come what may, and hunger after righteousness and will do it at all hazards. That means that they are men who have anything but an easy time of it in this world, whose temptation therefore is to hide their light and suppress their convictions to escape toil and trouble. It is indeed by way of warning against yielding to this very temptation that Jesus utters the counsel: "Let your light shine." He has just spoken in a parabolic way of what men do with natural lights. "Neither do men light a lamp and put it under the bushel" thereby hinting to disciples: "Put ye not your light under cover, set it rather on the stand, where it can be seen." Men are tempted to hide their light when letting it be seen exposes them to danger, to loss of name, property, or life. It is easy to show our light when it will bring honour and profit to ourselves. It is when there is neither profit nor honour going, at least for ourselves, that we are sorely tempted to suppress conviction and

[1] *Mal.* i. 6.

comply tamely with evil custom. And the most powerful aid to resistance of the temptation lies in the knowledge that in yielding to it we miss the opportunity of glorifying our Father in heaven. For the fact is even so. It is one of the sure laws of the moral order of the world that glorifying God and self-glorification are mutually exclusive. The circumstances which give you the golden opportunity of glorifying God are just those which afford the least chance of obtaining immediate glory and advantage to yourself. Contrariwise, when you are pursuing eagerly your own honour and interest and succeeding very well, be sure that the amount of honour you bring to God is very insignificant. It matters not that your work is within the technically religious sphere, and that you pretend to be very zealous for God's glory.

The moral heroes of human history, the pioneers of good causes, the warriors who fight a good fight for truth and justice, risking limb and life in the battle, the prophets, the martyrs, the confessors: — these are the men who let their light shine. These are the sons of God. These are the glorifiers of the Father's name, and in these the Father glories. Such are the men the Teacher on the Hill has in view throughout His discourse: the men who have been persecuted for righteousness sake (v. 10), the companions of persecuted prophets (v. 12), the men who, through no faults of theirs, have enemies to love, and persecutors to pray for (v. 44). And by using the name Father for God for the first time in this connection, He throws an important light on the nature of the Divine Fatherhood,

thereby teaching that God delights in moral heroes, and regards them *par excellence* as His children.

This is a very noteworthy doctrine. It is, *e.g.*, far in advance of that taught by Jewish doctors of the law, who set forth God to their disciples as one whose approval rested on those who studied well, and carefully kept, all the legal traditions. What a difference between the Father God of Jesus and the law-giving God of the Rabbis! The God of the Rabbis demands justice, the God of Jesus delights in magnanimity going far beyond what can be legally claimed. The model man of legalism is one who in respect of the commandments great and small (especially the small) is blameless. The model man of the Teaching on the Hill is one who not only lives correctly, but is ready to sacrifice himself for the good of others, however thankless the task. Blessed of God, said the Rabbi, is the faultless man. Blessed of the Father in heaven said Jesus, is the self-sacrificing, devoted, heroic man. Note further how far this doctrine rises above the vulgar notion that God's favour is revealed by outward prosperity. That view would oblige us to regard the noblest men that ever lived, the sages, prophets, apostles, and saviours of the race, as men accursed of God. Jesus has taught us a worthier way of thinking. "These," He says, "are the *sons* of God in whom He delights. A curse indeed rests on their life, but it is the curse, not of God, but of a world which in its ignorance and wickedness shuns the light and resents all earnest attempts to establish the reign of righteousness. This curse rests on my own life, as will more and more

clearly appear, but because I willingly bear it for the world's good, therefore doth my Father love me and account me His well-beloved Son."

Passing to the second text we find the Fatherhood of God referred to in it as a motive to *magnanimity*. Here again the motive throws light on the name. Our inference is that magnanimity is a characteristic of God. But we are not left to infer this. That God deals magnanimously with men is expressly declared when it is said that "He maketh His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." This magnanimity is an essential feature of the Divine Fatherhood. It is *as* a Father that God dispenses benefits to good and evil alike, treating good and evil, just and unjust, as His children. It is fatherlike thus to act. Many earthly fathers, certainly the best of them, so deal with their children. They give good gifts to all their children, not merely to the more exemplary with whom they are well-pleased. No father deals with his children on the principle of strict justice. Every good father does more for all his children than they can claim, much more than unworthy children deserve. It is therefore only in accordance with analogy that the Father in heaven should so act. That He does so act is familiar to us all. We can all testify: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins."[1] The least worthy have the best reason to know this. How much good they have received; how little they have deserved!

Thus far as to the general import of this second

[1] *Ps.* ciii. 10.

saying containing the name "Father." A little analysis may help us to a clearer view of its full significance. It contains, we observe, a statement of fact and a certain construction put on the fact.

The fact stated is that to a large extent good comes to all, irrespective of character. Sun and shower represent that common good. How much they cover! From sunshine and rain duly mixed, come good crops, food for man and beast in abundance. That means general well-being, all that one could wish for a community in the way of material prosperity.

That the fact is as Jesus stated it, is to us self-evident. But it was by no means a matter of course that a Jewish teacher should have seen the fact so clearly and stated it so broadly. The tendency of the Hebrew mind was to think differently, and to regard God solely as a moral Governor rendering to every man according to his works. For men holding this view there was a strong temptation to force facts to square with the theory. Strictly carried out, that would mean the sun shining only on the good, the rain falling only on the just, or the evil and unjust getting more sunshine and rain than is meet, bringing dearths and deluges to punish them for their sins. "Who," asked Eliphaz boldly, "who ever perished, being innocent, or when were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same."[1] That was the old theory in its baldest form. The hero of the poem is represented as doubting its truth. "Very natural, very desirable perhaps," replied he in effect,

[1] *Job* iv. 7, 8.

"but unhappily the facts do not bear your theory out." Jesus is on the side of Job. He breaks with the traditional theory, and He does so because He has discarded the traditional legal conception of God as a mere Governor dealing with men according to strict justice. His mind was not dominated by current opinions or theories however venerable, and among the notions He repudiated was this one that good or ill in lot is a sure index of good or ill in character. He saw and said that this view was contradicted by two classes of facts: by tribulations endured by good men for righteousness' sake and by temporal prosperity enjoyed by many unworthy men not less, often even more, than by the worthy. The statement in the text about the sun and the rain is therefore not to be taken as a mere truism which any one might have spoken. It is rather the original utterance of one endowed with an unbiassed mind, a clear vision and an unfettered tongue; who saw things as they were, and fearlessly said what He saw.

Note next the construction put upon the fact, which is even more characteristic. The fact being that to a large extent all things come alike to all, the question naturally obtrudes itself, what is the meaning of it? Some might say: that there is no real Providence; that all things happen by general law acting without design or consciousness, that the natural order of the universe is perfectly indifferent to moral interests. It certainly seems so, insomuch that no man who holds this view can be easily argued out of it by an appeal to facts, though there are facts of human history patent to a wide observation which go to show that there is indeed

a Power other than ourselves in the world making for righteousness. But besides this agnostic construction there is another which may be put on the facts, one harmonising with a firm faith in the living God, and in an intelligent Providence. We may see in the universal boons of sun and shower the *magnanimity* of a Father treating all His children to a certain extent alike.

Such was Christ's reading of the facts. As to the facts themselves He is at one with the unbeliever. The difference is wholly one of interpretation. But how wide the difference there! In the same facts the agnostic finds no God, and no Providence, while Jesus finds a *gracious* God, and a benignant magnanimous Providence. Extremes meet. No God, or the highest kind of God, a Father; no Providence, or a Providence good to all.

These two sayings of Jesus combined give a balanced view of the Divine Fatherhood. Each is complementary of the other. The one teaches that God hath a special paternal delight in the morally faithful, the other that he exercises a benignant Providence over all, doing good even to the morally unfaithful, His wayward and disobedient children. The former implies decided moral preference, the latter a sphere of action within which moral distinctions are overlooked. Either without the other is liable to run into excess. Moral preference tends to exclusiveness; universal benevolence to indifferentism. Combine the two and both defects are eliminated. Not only so, the two contrasted qualities interpenetrate and aid each other.

God's moral preferences lend emphasis to His magnanimity, making it appear a thing of grace and not a thing of course. On the other hand the Divine magnanimity viewed as unmerited favour is seen to signify a desire that the unworthy may become true sons of God, objects of His complacent regard; an invitation to those who are in the outer circle of sonship to press into the inner circle.

Most of the other texts in the Sermon containing the title "Father" bear on two topics: simplicity in religion, and freedom from care on the part of those who have made the Kingdom their chief end. They occur in the sixth Chapter of Matthew. Spurious religion appears invested with two evil qualities: ostentation, the vice of Pharisaism, and superstition, the vice of heathenism. The religion of the Pharisee, as manifested in almsgiving, praying and fasting, is in relation to men a display, in relation to God a form. The religion of the Pagan has for its root unbelief in the good-will of the gods, fear. Therefore when he prays he indulges in vain repetition, thinking that he shall be heard for his much speaking, by his *battology* compelling his god to lend a reluctant ear. The cure for both vices is a filial conception of God as Father. So Jesus hints to His disciples by the frequent introduction of the paternal title in this part of His discourse. And on reflection we perceive the truth of the doctrine. The relation of father and son, *like all intimate relations*, demands, in the first place, sincere, real affection. Every true son cares more for the esteem of his father than for that of the outside world. In

the sphere of religion this means that a true thought of God as Father gives the death blow to religious ostentation. The filial worshipper does not care about appearing devout to men, he seeks above all the approval of his heavenly Father. Then it will be impossible for him to mock his Father by a formal routine service in which there is no heart. He will offer always a worship in which thought and feeling find utterance: an *eloquent* worship, because therein *all that is within him* speaks.

Faith in the Divine Father is the cure for everything savouring of Pagan superstition in religion, not less than for Pharisaic ostentation and formalism. Who can indulge in vain repetition in prayer who believes in a Father's willing ear? More generally, what place for elaborate ritual of any sort in a religion which has for its object of worship a Father? Simplicity is congenial to the filial spirit. And by using the name Father in connection with the inculcation of simplicity in prayer, Jesus would have His disciples understand that God loves simplicity. Such love pertains to the paternal relation. There is a place for ceremonial in the public functions of a King, but in the bosom of his own family the most august monarch gladly makes his escape from pomp and state. In this connection we perceive the significance of another Father-saying not contained in the Sermon on the Mount but kindred in spirit to those now under consideration. "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up."[1] The particular plant

[1] *Matt.* xv. 13.

referred to was the tradition of the elders respecting ceremonial ablutions. The implied doctrine is that a Father God could have no hand in planting such an institution. His characteristic function rather is to eradicate everything of the kind which strikes its roots into the soil of man's religious nature. And the effectual uprooter is just the new way of thinking concerning God as Father. That was one of Christ's reasons for giving the new name so prominent a place in His religious vocabulary. He believed that just in proportion as His disciples got accustomed to a filial mode of conceiving God, would Rabbinical and even Levitical ritual lose its hold on their minds, and leave them free to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Would that the Church in all ages had been more abundantly baptized into the new Divine name! Then the portent of Sacramentarianism with all that goes along with it had never made its appearance in Christendom. For that also is a plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted.

"Care not, your Father cares for you," said Jesus in effect to His disciples in that part of His discourse which is directed against earthly anxieties.[1] It is assumed that those who are thus admonished are making the Kingdom of God their chief end, and the aim is to set them free from distraction arising out of concern about food and raiment. The appositeness of the title "Father" applied to God in this connection is obvious. It is a father's part to provide for his children. By calling God Father in an exhortation against care,

[1] *Matt.* vi. 25–34.

Jesus in effect teaches that God's Fatherliness includes providence among its attributes and functions. And if disciples but thoroughly believed this, it would certainly transport them into that care-free region of feeling in which their Master desired them to dwell. He lived habitually up there Himself, without effort because He had an undoubting faith in a Paternal Providence which with unsleeping solicitude looked after the interests of those who with singleness of heart gave themselves to the service of the Kingdom How perfect was the peace that through this faith reigned in His bosom, this very admonition against care suffices to show. What divine serenity it breathes! And what simple delight in the world of nature finds expression in it! The careworn are so moody and gloomy that they have no eye for the wild flowers, and no ear for the song of birds, or for the music of rippling brooks or autumn winds. But Jesus had an eye and an ear for all sights and sounds of nature. "I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Enquire not curiously of what flower He spoke, as if it must needs have been some exceptionally lovely flower of gorgeous hue that called forth such an encomium. Jesus, I believe, would have said the same thing about the simplest wild flower that grows in the meadow or by the wayside: the snowdrop, the primrose, or the daisy.

The peace Jesus Himself enjoyed He desired His disciples to attain, and for that end He plied them with arguments fitted to aid weak faith. Noteworthy are two drawn from human experience and put in the form

of questions: "Is not the life more than meat?" and "which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" Both questions suggest an argument from what God has done to what He may be expected to do. What He has done is in both instances the greater thing, what He has yet to do the less. God has given to all *life*, a greater thing than the means of life, food, and raiment. The argument is: if God has already bestowed on us the greater boon, why doubt as to His continuing to give us the less, — the means of sustaining that life He has conferred on all as an unsought blessing? The point of the second question is not so obvious. It seems to hint at a form of anxiety which no human being ever was absurd enough to cherish. Who ever thought of adding to his stature one cubit? Pressed by the surface difficulty many recent commentators have adopted the view that the question refers, not to increase of bodily stature, but to lengthening of life. The use of measures of length in space as symbols of length in time is not unexampled in Scripture. We have an instance of it in Psalm xxxix. 5, where, speaking of the brevity of life, the Psalmist says: "Behold thou hast made my days as an handbreadth." It is therefore quite conceivable that our Lord asked anxious-minded persons: "Which of you by any amount of care can add to his days a period of time corresponding in length to a cubit?" It would have been a very pertinent question, for the tendency of care is not to lengthen our days but rather to shorten them. Yet I am persuaded that this was not the thought Jesus meant to convey. His question refers to

stature, and its aim is to remind the anxious that God has done for every man arrived at maturity what no man by any amount of thinking or wishing can do for himself. Every grown man is more than a cubit taller than he was as a child. The addition to his stature is the effect of a gradual growth going on insensibly for years. How unobtrusively the marvellous result was achieved, the process incessantly going on, but from day to day unobservable, perceptible only after the lapse of large intervals of time. The boy measures himself against the wall to-day, and this time next year he will repeat the process and find to his delight that he has grown one or two inches. But he had no hand in producing that growth, save by taking the food provided for him by his parents and indulging with boyish glee in the sports which promote growth, but have not growth for their conscious aim. The cubit is added in the care-free time of life. The boy sports and grows and reaches manhood with one cubit or two or even three added to his stature, not by him but by the laws of nature, or as Christ would have said by the kindness of His heavenly Father. And Christ's argument is: "If God has done that greater thing for you, rearing you from infancy to the stature of manhood, providing all the time the food necessary for growth, why doubt His readiness and power to find for you the needful sustenance now? You did well by God's help when you were boys and girls, undistracted by care. Why not carry a little of the spirit of boyhood into your mature life, and, if possible, remain young-hearted all your days?"

We have now learned these four things regarding the Divine Fatherhood as defined by discriminating use in the hill teaching of our Lord: It implies delight in the noble conduct of heroic men; magnanimous treatment of the unworthy; intimate relations between God and men demanding from the latter sincere, simple-hearted religious affections; and effective provision for the temporal wants of all who devote themselves to the higher concerns of life. This is much, but it is not all. We miss a cheering word about the pardon of sin and aid in the fight with evil. The magnanimity ascribed to the Divine Father might indeed be held to cover these needs, and it does inferentially; yet the express reference of that attribute, as spoken of in the Sermon, is to the sunshine and the showers. Inference in connection with such vital matters is not enough; we need positive assurance. And we have it in two petitions of the *Pater Noster*: "Forgive us our debts," "Deliver us from evil." By putting these petitions into the mouths of disciples, in a prayer addressed to the Father in heaven, Jesus gave them to understand that pardon of their moral shortcomings and power to live well were boons to be confidently expected from one standing to them in the relation of Father. His doctrine at this point also is congruous to the nature of Fatherhood. Every true father forgives his children, not once, but many times. He deals not with them after their sins. He also gives them all the aid he can to do what is right; by prayer, wise counsel, and good example striving to keep their feet from evil ways. If God be indeed a father, He may be expected to do

likewise: not coming behind good earthly fathers, rather doing more for His erring children than an earthly parent has either the will or the power to do. A father on earth must sometimes stop short at mere desire. He cannot give his child a good spirit, or a holy bias, or write the law of duty on his heart. But the Divine Father is both able and willing. Often earthly fathers are lacking even in respect of good-will. How many of them readily conclude that *the waywardness* of a disobedient son has exceeded the limits of the forgivable, and harden their hearts against him? He is a rare father, of phenomenally tender heart, who can fitly represent in his parental conduct the mercy of God. Jesus has drawn his picture in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Why does that picture affect us so powerfully? Because it tells us fathers what we ought to be, but are not. It is a poetic ideal, far transcending the reality of ordinary family life. Jesus drew that pathetic picture that we might know that what for many of us is merely ideal is real for God. "God," He would teach, "behaves so towards His returning prodigal children. Judge Him not by yourselves. His ways are not your ways." In that beautiful parable, the doctrine of Jesus concerning the Fatherhood of God in the moral sphere reaches its climax. It is the best concrete commentary on the abstract general petition: "Forgive us our debts." Who without such a pictorial representation of Divine forgiveness would have the courage to think that even God could pardon in that magnificent way?

And yet there is greater magnificence behind all that. Nothing more generous and handsome can be conceived

than the reception given by the father to the prodigal on his arrival. But what if he had gone in quest of the wanderer as the shepherd went in quest of the straying sheep, enduring the hardships of the long way, and the miseries of the famine-stricken land, and, finding the lost one there, had claimed him as his son, and by moving entreaties induced him to return home? That would have been a deeper depth of pity, and a pardon costing the pardoner more. It is no fault of the parable that it leaves this phase of fatherly love out of the picture. Room had to be made for the free-play of *penitence*, the lost one in this case being not a sheep but a *man*. For in the human sphere finding means self-finding, — coming to oneself in contrite reflection. But the seeking and the suffering connected therewith have their place here also. The Son of man came to seek the lost. In Him, if He be Divine, the Father came to seek the lost. Patripassianism is not wholly a heresy.

CHAPTER IX

THE WORTH OF MAN

JESUS believed in the absolute infinite worth of man taken even at the lowest and meanest. But He did not express His faith in philosophical terms like infinite and absolute. He used the method of comparison. Once He employed a comparison which adequately embodied His idea: "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul. Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"[1] "Christ's maxim is: one soul outweighs the world." But usually He dealt in comparisons which seem utterly inadequate, as when in the admonition against care He asked anxious disciples: "Are ye not much better than they?" *i.e.*, than the fowls of the air.[2] Similarly in a discourse on apostolic tribulations, to keep the Twelve in good heart, He said: "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."[3] Comparisons at the best can never express absolute truth. To say that one thing is better than another, however good the latter may be, does not amount to saying that it is the best possible. But when the object whose value is being

[1] *Matt.* xvi. 26. [2] *Matt.* vi. 26. [3] *Matt.* x. 31.

estimated is compared with something of recognised standard worth, "better" practically means "best." So for example in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*. There also the method of comparison is used to set forth the excellence of the Christian religion. The writer's position really is: Christianity the best possible religion, the absolutely perfect, therefore the final form, of man's relation with God. But he puts that position in this way: Christianity better than the Old-Testament religion with all its agents and agencies of revelation and redemption. Practically it amounted to the same thing, because for the Hebrew Christians, for whose benefit the comparison was made, the ancient religion of the Jewish people, with its Moses and Aaron and Levitical rites, was a sacred divine institution. But "of more value than many sparrows," which have almost no worth at all, — that is surely not saying much! Yet in the very inadequacy of the comparison lies its pathos and its power as addressed to men who have a depressing sense of their own insignificance. Persons in this state of mind need such humble estimates to help them to rise to higher faith and bolder self-respect, and the use of them by Jesus is signal proof of His deep sympathy, as of His poetic tact and felicity. I value greatly these simple naïve questions of Jesus preserved for us in the synoptic gospels, as a contribution to His doctrine of man. There is nothing like them elsewhere in the New Testament; nothing so expressive and impressive, so suggestive, so humanely sympathetic, so quietly yet severely condemnatory of all low unloving estimates of human worth. Compare with these questions of Jesus

St. Paul's: "Doth God take care for oxen?"[1] Jesus could not have asked that question with an implied negative in His mind. His doctrine was: "God does take care even for oxen, but for men more."

These simple kindly comparisons by which our Lord sought to indoctrinate His disciples in the worth of man to God suggest more than they say, and provoke far-reaching reflections. Better than sparrows, than all fowls of the air, than a sheep,[2] or an ox.[3] How? Not in all respects. Man cannot fly like the birds, or sing like the lark, or furnish material that can be manufactured into cloth like the sheep, or bear heavy burdens like the ox. The ground of his superiority is not physical but spiritual. He can think and love, and act with freedom. In these respects he is unique, simply incomparable with "birds and fourfooted beasts," and not merely with them, but with the entire subrational universe. The principle involved in our Lord's question: "Are ye not much better than they" is that man, as a rational being and moral personality, is of more value than the whole inanimate and lower animate world. This is an essential principle in the Christian theory of the universe. And it is a principle which the most recent science amply justifies. The evolutionary conception of the process by which the world as it now is came into being, places man at the head of the creation. It assigns him this position just in proportion as it brings his whole nature, on its spiritual not less than on its physical side, within the scope of evolutionary law. When the scientist says:

[1] 1 *Cor.* ix. 10. [2] *Matt.* xii. 12. [3] *Luke* xiv. 5.

Man in his intellect and in his moral nature, as well as in his body, has been evolved, he declares in effect that man in his composite being is the crown and climax of the grand movement by which the present universe, with its endless variety of existences, has slowly emerged out of the primitive chaos of homogeneous matter. That being so, it follows of necessity that man is a being of unique significance. He is the key to the meaning of the universe and to the nature of its Maker. He is the end the Creator had in view in making the world. Till man arrives on the scene, one feels tempted to ask: To what purpose these stars, mountains, rocks, rivers, plains, and plants and animals of all sorts and sizes? When he makes his appearance, one begins to see that it was worth while to make a world. And one also begins to understand the nature of the Maker. He is, we see, one who has been working all through the ages towards the production of rational and moral beings. And hence we infer that He is Himself rational and moral. And as the Maker of the world had man in view as the *raison d'etre* of world-making, it stands to reason that He will care for man after He has in the fulness of the time brought him into existence. He will see to it that all the rational and moral possibilities of this new type of being shall be realised, and will make all nature's laws and all events co-operate towards this end. In other words, *A Kingdom of God*, with good men for its citizens, will be God's own chief end, directing and controlling the whole course of His providence.

This is a great bold thought which the hand of even

strong faith cannot at first grasp without trembling. Yet it is easier to believe that God thinks thus highly of man than for man himself to cherish such thoughts of his kind. Rather I should say that the main cause of unbelief in God's care for man is the low estimate men form of human nature in themselves and in others. Contempt of the human, whencesoever arising, is a fruitful cause of practical Atheism. Who can believe that God careth for men, who does not himself believe that a man is better than a sheep? And who are they who are guilty of scepticism so radical? Well, various sorts of people. Philosophers, *e.g.*, like Celsus, who deliberately maintained that man is no better than a beast, and that he is surpassed by some animals even in respect of morality and religion. Commercial men, also, who measure the worth of all things by their value as property. My sheep belongs to me, and I can sell it for so much, but that drunken good-for-nothing, what have I to do with him? He is not my slave, and even if he were, nobody would buy him. Even religious men have needed to be reminded of the worth of man as man. How much is a man better than a sheep? was a question addressed by our Lord to *Pharisees*. They really did not believe anything of the kind. They had got into a way of setting the human and the divine in antagonism. They made man the slave of the sabbath law in zeal for the supposed honour of the Divine Lawgiver. A sheep was a creature to be envied by comparison, as in virtue of its very irrationality lying outside the scope of the vexatious statute. For an analogous reason, they would not feel the force of the

parable of the Lost Sheep. Yes, they would say within themselves, we can understand a shepherd going after a strayed sheep and rejoicing when he found it. It belonged to him, and moreover it was blameless. But these publicans and sinners belong neither to you nor to us, and if they are lost it is their own fault, let them take the consequences.

In view of this inhuman type of religion then prevalent in Palestine, one can appreciate the startling significance of Christ's own bearing towards the neglected classes. It was nothing short of revolutionary. It would stimulate thought on the question: What is the worth of man even at the worst, far more powerfully than any number of mild suggestions as to man being better than this or that member of the lower animal creation. These might provoke from unsympathetic hearers a sceptical smile, but the mission to the outcasts of Capernaum provoked indignation, as against one who had committed a wanton outrage on the moral feelings of a God-fearing community. "Think of such scandalous people being treated even as fellow-*men*, not to say as comrades, admitted to social privilege on equal terms!" The rude shock to the sense of propriety is the measure of the innovation inaugurated, and of the extent to which the contemporary world needed education in the elementary rights and claims of man. As the teacher of a new doctrine on this subject, Jesus could not get past that Capernaum mission and all that went along with it. The holy rage of religionists was no doubt a regrettable circumstance, but unfortunately radical reforms cannot be brought about in this world

without rude initial shocks to prejudice. "Woe unto the world because of offences,"[1] but blessing also comes through them. Outrage to rooted caste pride first, and it may be fierce war in defence of cherished prerogative; then ultimate acceptance of a beneficent moral axiom which to disinterested wise humane men was self-evident from the first. Thank God for the men who bring this kind of offences. They are the world's benefactors and saviours, at a great cost to themselves. For woe is to that man by whom even the beneficent offence cometh. The world calls him evil names, and is not content till it has got rid of him. But he leaves his blessing behind him in the form of a truth that upsets partition walls, fills up gulfs of social cleavage, banishes the kingdoms of the wild beast type and ushers in the Kingdom of the *human*.

So did Jesus Christ teach His new doctrine concerning the worth of man by quaint pathetic comparisons, and by aggressive action which compelled all to take note that in His judgment a man was a man, even though a publican and a "sinner." He crowned the doctrine by the name He assumed for Himself: *Son of man*. This name Jesus nowhere formally defines, any more than He defines the name He gave to God. In this case, as in that, He defines only by discriminating use. We must listen attentively as He calls Himself *Son of man*, and strive to catch the sense of the title from the tone and accent of the Speaker. To do this successfully needs a sensitive sympathetic ear, unfilled with other sounds that blunt its perceptive faculty.

[1] *Matt.* xviii. 7.

Lacking such an ear, men may get very false impressions, and read all sorts of meanings into the simple phrase, collected perhaps from Old Testament texts, or suggested by systems of theology. To my ear the title speaks of one who is sympathetic and unpretentious; loves men and advances no ambitious claims. He may be great, so to speak, in spite of Himself, by gifts and graces even *unique*, but these must speak for themselves. He will not take pains to point them out, or advertise His importance as their possessor. The Son of man wears no grand airs, but is meek and lowly. He is simply the *Man*, the brother of men; loving humanity with a passionate love which fits Him to be the world's Christ, but His personal attitude is that of one who says: "Discover what is deepest in me, and draw your own inference."

Specially instructive is the earliest instance of the use of this title by our Lord, occurring in the First Gospel. Matthew introduces it for the first time in connection with the offer of a *scribe* to become a disciple.[1] The incident is recorded both by Matthew and by Luke,[2] but in neither Gospel is there any clear indication of its true historical setting. We may assume that it happened after the attitude of the class to which the aspirant belonged, towards Jesus, had been made manifest, and that the reception given to the would-be disciple was influenced by Christ's practical acquaintance with that class. Were we to take as our guide Luke, who introduces the aspirant simply as a certain person, we should of course lay no stress

[1] *Matt.* viii. 19, 20. [2] *Luke* ix. 57, 58.

on the indication of his profession given in the narrative of Matthew. But that a scribe should offer to become a disciple was so unlikely, that no reason can be assigned for its place in the tradition, save that it was a fact. And just because it was unlikely, we are entitled to treat the fact as important, and to interpret in the light of it both the name Jesus gave Himself, and the repellent word He addressed to the candidate for discipleship.

Taking the latter first, when we remember to whom Jesus is speaking it becomes probable that the saying: "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have lodging-places, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" is to be taken parabolically. That is to say, it refers to Christ's spiritual situation as one who has no home for His soul in the religion of the time, rather than to His physical condition, as one at the moment without any certain dwelling-place. Though this view suggested itself to my mind only recently, I confess that I have always felt a certain measure of dissatisfaction with the current conception of our Lord's meaning. I have never been able to see any special aptitude of the saying, so understood, to the case of the person addressed, nor have I been able to get rid of the feeling that the word taken in the literal sense is not without a certain tone of exaggerated sentiment, according ill with the known character of Jesus. There does not seem to have been any great hardship in the physical aspect of the life of our Lord and His disciples, such as might scare away any one the least inclined to disciple life. And suppose this aspirant had been admitted to

the ranks of discipleship, would he not have been one more added to the number of followers possessing means sufficient to make the daily life of the Jesus-circle not without a due measure of comfort.[1] On these grounds the suggestion that the saying about the foxes and the birds is to be interpreted parabolically came to my mind as a relief. Looked at in this light it is seen to be at once very true, and very apposite. How thoroughly true that Jesus was spiritually an alien, without a home in the religion of the time! Recall all that quite probably had happened before this incident took place: the charge of blasphemy in connection with the healing of the palsied man, the offence taken at the festive meeting with the publicans, and the scandalous charges that grew out of that event, the numerous conflicts respecting Sabbath keeping, fasting, ritual ablutions, and the like, the infamous suggestion that the cure of demoniacs was wrought by the aid of Beelzebub, and so on. If the whole, or even a part of these experiences lay behind Him when he uttered this word, with what truth and pathos Jesus might say: The foxes and the birds of the air are better off than I am, so far as a home for the soul is concerned. Then with what point and pungency He might say this to a *scribe!* For was it not the class the aspirant belonged to that made Him homeless? Whether viewed as an excuse for reluctance to receive him as a disciple, or as a summons to deliberate consideration of what was

[1] *Vide Luke* viii. 1–3, which Wendt regards as a kind of introduction to the passage about the three aspirants, *Luke* ix. 57–62, as it stood in the book of *Logia*.

involved in the step he was proposing to take, the word was altogether seasonable. In the one case it meant: You need not wonder if I give not a prompt warm welcome to *you*, remembering all that has passed between me and the class you belong to. In the other case it means: consider how it is with me; I am a religious outlaw, suspected, hated, a fugitive from those who seek my life. Are you really able to break with your class in opinion, feeling, and interest, and to bear the obloquy and ill-will that will inevitably come upon you as my disciple?

Let us turn now to this title "Son of man," which we meet with here for the first time in Matthew's Gospel, and enquire what view of its import is most naturally suggested by the situation of Jesus as parabolically described, and by the religious connections of the party addressed. We may assume that, as in all cases probably more or less, so very specially in this case, the title was used significantly, and not merely from custom. It served, that is to say, as a symbol of the religious attitude of Jesus, and as a protest against the antagonistic attitude of the scribes. Wherein then did the difference between the two attitudes lie? It might be summed up in these two particulars. First, the religion of the scribes was *inhuman;* it posited an artificial false antithesis between the divine and the human interest. Second, it was *ambitious*. The spirit of pride and self-importance pervaded it throughout. This spirit found expression in the Messianic idea of the scribes, as in all other parts of their system. Only a Messiah coming with worldly pomp would please

them. He must come as the Son of some great One, and be in all things like His descent. We quite understand how when Jesus asked the Pharisees (in spirit identical with the scribes): What think ye concerning the Christ? whose Son is he? they were so ready with the answer: The Son of *David*.[1] That was the essential point for them. Davidic descent before all things, everything else subordinate and conforming thereto.

At both points Jesus stood in irreconcilable antagonism to the scribes. He was emphatically, passionately *human*, and He was *humble*. In His whole public career, by every word and act, He was ever saying in effect: "I stand for the human, not as opposed to the divine, but as ultimately identical with it. I am jealous for God's honour, and just on that account I champion the interest of man. For I find in this land among those who make themselves prominent in religion a spurious zeal for the divine whose practical issue is immorality and inhumanity. They encourage men to say 'Corban,' and so excuse themselves for neglecting the duties of filial piety.[2] They interpret the Sabbath law of rest so strictly as to make it wrong for a man to satisfy hunger by rubbing a few ears of corn in his hands,[3] or to heal a sick man on the seventh day, so bringing the Fourth Commandment into needless conflict with the higher law of mercy. Therefore I make it my business to emphasise the neglected interest, not in a onesided way or in the spirit of mere reaction, but as the best way of guarding that very

[1] *Matt.* xxii. 42. [2] *Matt.* xv. 5. [3] *Matt.* xii. 1–8.

divine interest of which they have constituted themselves the patrons." The contrast in the other respect was not less glaring. The scribes loved titles of honour. They desired to be called of men Rabbi.[1] It gratified their vanity and proclaimed their importance as men who knew the law and the traditional interpretation of it current in the schools. Jesus had nothing in common with them here. He set no value on complimentary epithets, or on any expressions of respect towards Himself, except in so far as they represented intelligent and sincere conviction. He declined even to be called "good" in the way of compliment by one who came to Him enquiring the way to Eternal Life.[2] His aversion to everything savouring of vanity, ostentation, self-importance and self-advertisement was austere and unconquerable. He prayed not at the street corner, but amid the solitude of the mountains when men were asleep. He withdrew into the wilderness from popular admiration. He enjoined on His disciples to tell no man that He was the Christ.

The title "Son of man" as used in the reply to the scribe was a compendious proclamation of this twofold antagonism. It said these two things: Son of *man* in my religious tendency, zealous for the human; Son of *man* in my estimate of myself, as opposed to son of *David*, the attractive title for those who desire a Messiah harmonising with vain thoughts. Charged with such significance it set very fully before the scribe the grave import of the step he proposed to take in becoming a disciple. That, we now clearly under-

[1] *Matt.* xxiii. 7. [2] *Mark* x. 17.

stand, did not lie in entering on a life of physical hardship. It rather lay in this: that the aspirant to discipleship was called upon to abandon forever Rabbinical ways of thinking, and to adopt as his leader one who could make no response to current Messianic hopes. What happened? We are not told, but we are apt to take for granted that of course the scribe turned away from a Master who seemed so cynically indifferent to his approaches. Indeed we are inclined to wonder how a scribe could ever think of becoming a disciple of Jesus, even if he possessed only a moderate acquaintance with His character, and are tempted to suspect that in connecting the aspirant with this class, the evangelic tradition is at fault. But it has to be remembered that the class-spirit does not dominate all the members of a fraternity to a uniform extent, and that Mark tells of a scribe who had considerable sympathy with the ideas of Jesus, and whom Jesus regarded with much interest as one not far from the Kingdom of God.[1] It takes time for a human soul to be made an abject willing slave of a pernicious religious system, and in the case of not a few young men of ingenuous spirit and somewhat robust moral sentiments, the process is a species of martyrdom. There were doubtless among the scholars of the scribes some whose better nature revolted against the doctrines they were being taught. Such malcontents would steal away now and then from the school to hear the new Preacher, as young men and women in our cities now steal away from orthodox churches to hear some charm-

[1] *Mark* xii. 28–34.

ing heretic. And of course these runaways felt the spell of Him who taught "not as the scribes." What wonder if one at least bethought himself of breaking away from their dominion and joining the society of the Great Proscribed?

I have discussed at some length this first text in Matthew's Gospel containing the title "Son of man" because of the light which, in virtue of its setting there, it throws on the strong convictions of our Lord concerning the significance of man. My present aim is not to discuss the import of the title for its own sake, but simply in connection with what I regard as a wider and more important question: What Jesus thought of the race with which He so emphatically identified Himself. But I may say that I regard it as a happy circumstance that just this particular text is the first containing the title which we encounter in perusing the records of our Lord's ministry. For it is not only the first, but the most luminous. The title *scribe* given to the aspirant furnishes the key to the title *Son of man* assumed by the Master. And the meaning struck out of the latter like a spark out of steel by the stroke of a flint, is in turn the key to its meaning in some other texts where its sense is often misapprehended. For example in the text: "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day."[1] The title here is not to be charged with all sorts of theological meanings, such as the "ideal Man," or the Man who while human is more, even Divine, or the Messiah invested with full Messianic prerogative. It is not yet become a stereo-

[1] *Matt.* xii. 8.

typed phrase, a *vox signata;* it is a phrase whose meaning is fluid, used with conscious significance, and with strict relevance to the context. And the connection requires that, as in the text we have so fully considered, it should be taken as meaning, "the Man who stands for the human interest as distinct from the supposed divine interest." Christ's whole thought is: "the Sabbath was made for man, not (as you think) man for the Sabbath; therefore I who make it my business to vindicate the claims of the neglected human, am the best judge of how the Sabbath is to be observed. I have no desire to set it aside, for as God meant it, it is a beneficent institution; but I wish and intend to restore to it its true place and function as having for its end man's good." So again in the text "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him."[1] The idea is not: blasphemy against the Son of man comes next to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost in heinousness, and therefore is barely forgivable. So understood it takes its place in a climax thus: blasphemy against ordinary men forgivable of course, blasphemy against the extraordinary ideal man barely forgivable, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost not forgivable at all. The meaning rather is: blasphemy against the Son of man shall be forgiven just as blasphemous words against any son of man may be forgiven. If it be asked why the Son of man and sons of men in general are put on a level, we shall get light by reflecting

[1] *Matt.* xii. 32.

on the source of the blasphemy against the Son of man. The main source of the blasphemies against the Son of man, in matter of fact, was just *that He stood so stoutly for the human.* He identified Himself with neglected, outraged human interests, and He suffered in name and fame in consequence, and He was content to do so, and took it all as a matter of course, and regarded it as in most cases the result of a very pardonable misunderstanding. He associated with publicans and sinners, and they called Him a drunkard, a glutton, and a philo-publican.[1] He healed on the Sabbath day, and they called Him a Sabbath-breaker. He cheered the heart of the palsied man by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins, and they called Him a blasphemer.[2] He allowed a sinful woman to touch His person, and it was inferred that if He was a good man He at all events could not be a prophet.[3] He pitied the poor demoniacs and restored them to health and sanity, and they said "He is in league with Beelzebub." It is true that in this last instance He did not take the blasphemy as a matter of course, but made it the subject of grave animadversion, as if it bordered on the unpardonable. But why so? Simply because He found it impossible to believe that in this case as in most of the others just enumerated, it was the result of a pardonable misunderstanding. He did not at all wonder that men misjudged Him when they saw Him associating with the social pariahs. Fellowship with such for their moral rescue was so new a thing, and fellowship with them from love of their evil ways so

[1] *Matt.* xi. 19. [2] *Matt.* ix. 2–3. [3] *Luke* vii. 39.

much the rule, that misconception could hardly fail to arise. The calumniated one, even in that case, might have his own suspicions as to the real sources of the calumny; but the presumption was against Him, and He was silent. It was the penalty He had to pay for doing a daring thing at the bidding of an unexampled love and value for man, even at the worst. But in the case of the Beelzebub-hypothesis the position was different. The demoniacs were not regarded with moral aversion like the publicans and "sinners." They were not immoral, but simply unhappy sufferers under some supernatural influence of a malignant type. Men regarded them with feelings kindred to those we cherish towards the insane. Pity for them, therefore, even if unusual in degree, offered no occasion for sinister remark. That one tried to cure them could not legitimately expose to suspicion, for such attempts were not uncommon in unsuspected quarters. The offence of Jesus in this instance was not His pity, nor His effort to succour, but His *signal success*. That made Him famous and popular, therefore it had to be explained away, or, if the fact could not be denied, its character had to be somehow blackened. The Beelzebub-hypothesis was invented for this purpose. The inventors had no faith in it themselves; they simply hoped that it would throw dust in the eyes of an admiring populace. And that was why their sin appeared to Jesus so serious. It was not in His view a sin of misunderstanding against the Son of man arising out of His identifying Himself with novel or unpopular humanities, but a sin against knowledge committed by men

who would say and do anything rather than admit that any good was to be found in *Him*.

I do not forget that the title "Son of man" has another side, an apocalyptic sense connecting it with the visions of Daniel, and with the glories of the second advent. But even on that side it is not divorced from the radical sense of standing for the human. Daniel's Kingdom of one like unto a Son of man is a Kingdom of the *human* as distinct from Kingdoms of the brutal type symbolised by wild beasts,—lion, bear, leopard, or other unnamed monster more hideous and ferocious than the rest. The Kingdom of the human came to its rights in the teaching and ministry of Jesus, and this constitutes His best claim to be the Christ, not mere physical descent from David, though that, as the genealogies attest, may have been a fact. And whatever apocalyptic glories may be in store for the Son of man, they will never be such as to put Him out of conceit with the humanities He inaugurated, or divorce His celestial life from His life on earth. The Son of man who returns to this world, accompanied by a royal escort of angels, to take His seat as judge of men, does not forget His state of humiliation or the classes of which that state made Him a fellow. He judges men by the way in which they treat the classes who are lightly esteemed, and whom He still accounts His brethren. The glorified Son of man, in the teaching of Jesus, is still the man who stands for the human, whose heart burns with the "enthusiasm of humanity," and His decisive test of character is the relation in which men stand to that sacred passion.

Does it burn in their hearts, then they are the children of the Father. Are they inhuman, then their place cannot be in the Kingdom prepared by the Father for those who with heart and soul have practised the humanities.[1]

Christ's doctrine of man is grand, and still at the end of nineteen centuries stands above Christendom a lofty unreached ideal. And what shall we say of Him who taught it, not by word only, but still more emphatically by deed? Surely that He has earned the Eternal honour of all who seek the good of their kind. With open face we see "the Saviour and the Friend of man," and His teaching and His example are the inspiration of all who desire to leave the world better than they found it.

[1] *Matt.* xxv. 31-46.

CHAPTER X

THE MORAL IDEAL

On the subject of the worth of man, which occupied our attention in the last chapter, the Teaching on the Hill gave us rather our key-note, or starting-point, than full materials for a detailed statement. "Are ye not much better than they?" was its solitary but most suggestive contribution. It is otherwise with the present topic, the doctrine of the moral ideal or of the true righteousness of the Kingdom. That may be said to be the theme of the instruction communicated to disciples on the mountain-top. From beginning to end the Teacher is engaged in answering the question: How do you conceive human conduct in relation to God and men, how, *e.g.*, in comparison with Rabbinical or Pharisaic teachers, whom we have heard you occasionally criticise? If they are wrong, what is right? That was a question sure to be asked by disciples of the "labouring and heavy laden" type; and, even if there were none such in the actual disciple-circle, the Master would find it necessary, in order to do justice to His own conception of the true life, to take an opportunity of dealing with the problem, time and place being convenient. No better time can be

thought of than in the middle period of our Lord's public career, after the synagogue ministry in Galilee was over, and before the last months when the final crisis was in view, and self-sacrifice became the pressing topic of the hour; and no better place than a mountain retreat affording the necessary detachment, and favourable to the didactic mood.

In Matthew's report of Christ's Teaching on the Hill, His doctrine of Righteousness is cast into the form of a contrast between His own ideas on the subject and those current among "the scribes and Pharisees." This was the most natural method to employ in the circumstances. The righteousness of the scribes was an obtrusive fact familiar to all. It had to be reckoned with by one proposing to give a course of instruction in religion and morals, and a teacher could most easily and clearly communicate to his scholars precise ideas of his own views on these topics by collating them with a conflicting system widely prevalent. This polemic, the larger part of the discourse, disappears in the pages of Luke, where the Teaching on the Hill assumes the form of a sermon to an ideal Christian congregation, mainly Gentile in its composition, and therefore supposed to have no practical interest in controversial references to the opinions of the Jewish contemporaries of the Saviour. This omission was perfectly natural, however it came about, whether through a gradual transformation in the tradition before it reached Luke's hands, or by the exercise of editorial discretion on the part of the Evangelist himself. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that

those Christians who knew the Teaching on the Hill only through Luke's narrative lost nothing of permanent didactic value. For in truth the large section omitted, while polemical in form, is essentially a body of most valuable positive instruction as to the nature of true righteousness. Even the polemical element is not to be despised as of purely antiquarian character, or at best as possessing merely historical interest, in so far as it gives us some information concerning the religious opinions and practices of the scribes and Pharisees. It contains Christ's negative doctrine of righteousness, setting forth in very explicit terms what righteousness is *not*. But if the polemical form be distasteful to us, we can easily strip it off, which done, there will still remain an unmutilated, perennially valid account of what, in the mind of our Lord Jesus, true righteousness really *is*.

Our Lord's doctrine of righteousness here, as throughout the Evangelic Records, is dominated by the conception of God as *Father*. The righteousness inculcated is distinctively *filial*. In Christ's system of religious thought there were three ideas of cardinal importance, and so related to each other that once you are acquainted with any one of them you can determine for yourself the import of the other two. The three ideas were represented by the three great words, *Kingdom*, *Father*, *Righteousness*. Suppose you begin your studies with the word "Father," and ascertain by an inductive examination of the various texts in which it occurs what it signified as discriminatingly used by Jesus; then you can determine almost without de-

tailed enquiry, by deduction, what "Kingdom" and "Righteousness" on His lips must mean. The Kingdom will signify: God obtaining sovereign influence over human hearts by paternal love, in virtue of which He calls all men, even the basest, His sons, freely pardons their offences, and invites them to participate in fullest family privilege and fellowship. And the righteousness of the Kingdom will be that of men who stand to God in the relation of sons, and to fellow-men in the relation of brethren. The whole doctrine of righteousness will be capable of being summarily comprehended in these two precepts: Be to God all that a son should be to a father, Treat fellow-men as brethren. As a matter of fact, all the special injunctions contained in the Sermon on the Mount can easily be brought under one or other of these heads. It may be worth while to take a cursory glance at the legislative programme by way of verifying this statement.

The first precept of the Master is, "Let your light shine." That means, as we have already ascertained, seek your Father's honour. Picking out the precepts in the sequel belonging to the same category, — viz., duty to God, — we come next to that contained in Chap. V. 45–48, the gist of which is: imitate the character of the Divine Father, even in its most sublime virtues, such as magnanimity. Passing into the sixth chapter, we meet with an admonition to shun vulgar ostentation, religious parade, in almsgiving, fasting, praying, with insatiable appetite for the good opinion of men, — which, translated into non-controversial terms, means: value supremely, if not solely,

the judgment of the Father in heaven, who looks into the heart of things, and not merely at the surface.[1] Then follows a counsel concerning prayer, whose import is, cherish towards God as your Father sincere reverence, manifesting itself in devout adoration and lowly yet confiding petitions.[2] Then finally, in the close of the same chapter, comes the injunction to make the Kingdom of the Father, the divine interest in the world, the chief end of life, with single-hearted devotion, and with absolute freedom from care about personal concerns, trusting implicitly in the heavenly Father's ever-watchful and faithful providence.[3]

Turning now to those precepts which come under the second general category, duty to men, we find first a precept attaching itself to the sixth commandment: Thou shalt not kill. Christ's injunction virtually is: Be not content with merely not killing a fellow-man; cherish towards him, as a brother, a love which shall make it impossible to hate him or despise him.[4] At this point the doctrine of the Master is full of local colouring, with Hebrew words such as Raca, and references to Jewish tribunals, investing it with a foreign, far-off aspect, and depriving it apparently of universal value. But it is only the shell that is temporary, the kernel is perennial. Nothing is more characteristic of the great Master than the way in which He classes the degrees of guilt in connection with the various offences against the law of brotherly love. He treats sins

[1] *Matt.* vi. 1–6, 16–18. [2] *Matt.* vi. 7–15.
[3] *Matt.* vi. 25–34. [4] *Matt.* v. 21–24.

seemingly trivial, such as calling a man names, as more heinous than offences committed in a passion of rage. The reason is that the former imply cold contempt, more inhuman than anger which prompts to acts often bitterly regretted as soon as the hot temper cools down. *Raca* expresses contempt for a man's head = you stupid! *More*, fool, contempt for his heart or character = you scoundrel. Very notable likewise is the counsel to the man who is at variance with a brother, to give the work of reconciliation precedence of sacrifice. Whether it formed part of the Teaching on the Hill is a question of minor moment; it is at any rate an unmistakable and precious element of Christ's doctrine of morals. Note first the general thesis: ethics before religion. This was fundamental in our Lord's teaching, enforced with much emphasis and due iteration. *Placability* before sacrifice, *mercy* before sacrifice, *filial affection* versus Corban. Doctrine most wholesome, and urgently needed then and always. Note next the peremptory terms in which the special injunction is enforced. The man who has a variance is supposed to be standing by the altar when he remembers the matter between him and his brother. A few minutes will suffice for presenting duly his offering. Of course, then, the counsel is: Despatch quickly your religious business and hasten back to your alienated brother, urged on to the work of reconciliation by the solemn feelings awakened by the sacrificial service. No! but rather, "leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." The counsel may seem very open to criticism.

Does it not, for example, set more importance on the love due to a brother man, than on the honour due to the Father in heaven, and place the *second* great commandment before the *first?* It may seem so, but disciples will be more profitably occupied in laying duly to heart the intense *ethicalism* of the Master's teaching than in criticising His strong way of putting things.

Next comes a precept based on the seventh commandment: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."[1] Which may be thus paraphrased: "Be not satisfied with abstaining from acts of impurity towards a woman; regard her as a sister whose honour shall be for thyself inviolable, and in reference to others an object of jealous defence." For it is obvious that only such a way of regarding a woman can effectually exclude evil desire. Towards a *sister* no one but a monster could cherish lustful thoughts. Let every woman get a sister's place, and she is safe from the heart that lusteth and the member that offendeth. But what delicate, tender, generous love is needful for that! Perhaps only one bearing our common human nature ever loved so, even He who spake the words I now comment on. He was tempted, we are taught, in all respects as we are. But every woman He saw was as a mother, a daughter, a sister,—a sacred object of tender respect through the mighty power of a pure holy love.

Worthy of all acceptation and honour is the doctrine

[1] *Matt.* v. 27, 28.

Jesus taught on the kindred topic of *divorce*.[1] Jewish women had from of old been subject to grievous wrong in connection with the married state. They were regarded as the property of their husbands, and they were liable to be put away for any cause at the caprice of their lords, without redress, except that secured by an ancient statute which ordained that a wife when put away should be furnished with a document certifying the fact of her divorcement, so that she might be free from her former husband and at liberty to marry another. The scribes in our Lord's time busied themselves about getting the bill of separation into due legal form. They did nothing to restrain the unjust caprice of husbands, but rather opened a wider door to license. Some of them recognised the most whimsical dislikes, even a wandering fancy for a fairer woman, as a sufficient reason for putting away. But they were duly zealous to have the bill of divorcement, even in such an outrageous case, in proper form, and they may have flattered themselves that by such action they were defending the rights of women. What a contrast between these pedants and Jesus. He raised the previous question, and asserted a more radical right of woman, — the right not to be put away, except when she put herself away by her own misconduct. He revived the old heroic prophetic cry: "I hate putting away,"[2] so performing an act of humanity of immense importance for Christian civilisation, and exhibiting courage as one fighting single-handed against long established evil custom.

[1] *Matt.* v. 31, 32. [2] *Mal.* ii. 15.

The Teacher on the Hill made a most valuable contribution to the illustration of the law of brotherly love in connection with the old legal rule of retaliation: "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."[1] What He said on this subject amounted to this: "Be not the slave of legal claims. Assert your moral rights by renouncing your legal ones, and refuse to be provoked into retaliation by any amount of injustice or unbrotherliness." The concrete forms under which this general precept is presented are Eastern in their costume, and some of them require a word of explanation for modern and Western readers. The coat and the cloak are the two principal pieces of man's apparel, the former being the under-garment, or tunic, the latter the upper-garment, or mantle, — the more valuable article, and serving as bed-clothing by night, as well as the purpose of dress by day. The counsel thus is: If any man claims as his legal right thy less valuable under-garment, dispute not his claim, let him have what he demands, and over and above thy more costly upper robe. The instance of compulsion to go a mile refers probably to military requisitions. The word rendered "compel" was originally Persian, and was subsequently introduced into the Greek and Latin languages. It denoted primarily to requisition men, beasts, or conveyances for the courier system, then under the successors of the Persians in the East, and under the Roman Empire it was applied to the forced transport of military baggage by the inhabitants of a country through which troops

[1] *Matt.* v. 38.

were marching. Doubtless the Jewish people in the time of our Lord had experience of this system, sometimes in an oppressive form. An instance of compulsory service under military authority is supplied in the Gospel narratives of the crucifixion—Simon of Cyrene forced by the soldiers to carry the cross of Jesus.[1] The counsel of Him who was one day to get that accidental benefit of an evil system, to disciples gathered about Him on the hill, was this: "Take the sting out of the compulsion by rendering the service demanded freely, and make your freedom conspicuous by doubling the service. If required to carry soldiers' baggage one mile, carry it two, no man compelling." How wise this teaching, if hard to carry into practice! Yea, and how easy too if only we had the requisite moral dignity and the needful amount of love! What an infinite amount of annoyance men escape who obey these evangelic precepts, and to what an extent they contribute towards the humanising of the world. Doubtless there are men, many, who would victimise such gentleness, yet on a broad view of things it remains true that the meek shall inherit the earth. Christ's precepts about turning the other cheek, and giving the mantle into the bargain, are not to be turned into obligatory rules. But the spirit they embody is that which alone can bring about the desirable consummation, a universal brotherhood.

After these examples of the Teacher's lofty ethical doctrine, breathing throughout the spirit of brotherly

the final instance of the new way of thinking,

[1] *Matt.* xxvii. 32; *Mark* xv. 21; *Luke* xxiii. 26.

as opposed to the traditional, does not come upon us as a surprise. We are prepared to receive it simply as the crown of the foregoing discourse. "It hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy, But I say unto you, Love your enemies."[1] Luke, who omits so much, is careful to retain this precept, of course with the controversial reference left out. Indeed, he not only retains it but gives it twice, using it in the first instance as a caption under which to collect the moral sentences which in Matthew's version serve to illustrate our Lord's doctrine concerning the *lex talionis*, along with the law of reciprocity.[2] One cannot but feel that Luke's version at this point is secondary and somewhat artificial, and that the discourse has undergone manipulation at the hands either of the Evangelist or of those who shaped the tradition he uses. But be that as it may, the author of the Third Gospel has the merit of perceiving that the precept "Love your enemies" was the most characteristic and important feature in the Teaching on the Hill. And the device of iteration to which he resorts, serves the double purpose of compensating for what is omitted, and emphasising what is retained. Another contrivance for the same purpose may be found in the introductory phrase: "But I say unto you who hear." This, coming in immediately after the initial Beatitudes and Woes, means: "Now, my hearers, having spoken these opening sentences, let me declare to you what is the great funda-

[1] *Matt.* v. 43, 44.
[2] *Luke* vi. 27–34.

mental duty incumbent on every disciple of mine: *Love;* love even your *enemies.*"

Coming back to Matthew's form, wherein we find both thesis and antithesis, the gist of the great law of love as therein proclaimed is: "Acquiesce in no conventional classification of men as friends and foes, neighbours and enemies; let all be friends and neighbours, or let foes and strangers be distinguished as the objects of a more chivalrous love, so overcoming evil with an absolutely invincible good." This new teaching on its positive side would probably commend itself immediately and for the moment to the consciences of all hearers, but if there were any present who cherished friendly feelings towards the scribes, they might be inclined to question the accuracy and fairness of the representation given of their teaching. Had any scribe or Rabbi ever taught in so many words that men should love their neighbour and hate their enemy? Perhaps not, especially if we understand by neighbours and enemies *private or personal* friends and foes. Yet our Lord's statement truly reflects the spirit which characterised the teaching of the Jewish schools. The tendency of Israel's election from the first had been to foster aversion to the outside nations, and from the time of Ezra the spirit of Judaism had been one of growing hostility to the Gentiles, witness the book of Esther. And Jesus knew well that the average Jew was only too ready to follow the guidance of the scribes, and, while cherishing a tribal affection for his countrymen, to regard with racial and religious abhorrence all beyond the pale.

The paraphrastic clauses added to the main precept "Love your enemies" in Matthew's narrative, as reproduced in our Authorised Version, are an importation from Luke. In the best texts there is only a single addition: Pray for those who persecute you. It applies the general counsel to the case of those whom it is most difficult to love; those viz., whose enmity has its origin in religion. There is no hatred so bitter or so hard to bear. Of such hatred the followers of Jesus were destined to have ample experience in later days, and it is very credible that with prescience of what was in store for them, He strove betimes to imbue them with the Christian temper of forbearance and of returning good for evil. It is possible indeed that all these added clauses in Luke, including the one in Matthew, are interpretative glosses, and that all that the Master said was "Love your enemies," leaving His disciples to expand the counsel for themselves. In that case they proved skilful commentators, for the love of enemies, when genuine, will just mean blessing them that curse you, doing good to them that hate you, and praying for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. And they were skilled interpreters because they were faithful doers of their Master's will. Their comments are simply a transcript of their conduct. So they behaved, and so therefore they represented the Master as teaching them to behave. The heroic temper of the Apostles, their benignant bearing towards foes, is a signal illustration of what even common men can attain to through the inspiring influence of cherished memories of lofty teaching reinforced by

an equally lofty example. "They had been with Jesus."

Having laid down the new law, Jesus added characteristically lofty inducements to keep it: likeness to God (v. 45), moral distinction among men (vv. 46, 47). "Cultivate," said the Master, "the magnanimity of the Father in heaven, and rise superior to average human morality." Enough has been said on the former part of the admonition in another chapter;[1] a little comment on the latter part may here be offered. Very noteworthy is Christ's desire that His disciples should be morally distinguished: "If ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others," asks He, as if the right and proper thing were that they should do more. What do ye more, or what do ye that is excellent, exceptionally good! Jesus will not have His men be moral mediocrities, content with a virtue not beyond the reach of publicans and Pagans who are credited with readiness to love those that love them and be kindly affectioned towards kinsfolk. His expectations are great, His demands high; on the first blush one might say mercilessly high. Hear what He says to these disciples on the hill: "Have nothing in common with scribes and Pharisees, their righteousness is naught; do all that the average publican and Pagan does in the way of reciprocity, and a great deal more; let neither the religious, nor the irreligious Jew, nor the best of Gentiles be your model. If ye will have a standard, let it be God. Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." Too high to be attainable do

[1] *Vide* chap. viii.

you say; too high to be even taken seriously? Nay, the loftiness of this moral ideal is its charm and its power. It is vulgar, low-pitched moral ideals that fail. They do not command respect, they make their appeal to the lower side of our nature, to self-interest and prudence; they lack the power to awaken enthusiasm in any human being. The lofty unearthly ideal of Jesus Christ on the other hand makes its appeal distinctly, exclusively, and confidently to the heroic element that slumbers in every man. It speaks to us in words charged with the subtle charm of poetry, or with the spirit-stirring power of military music. It arouses enthusiasm, it transforms timid men into brave soldiers ready to fight without thought of fear, it makes sinful men partakers of the Divine nature, capable of morality Godlike in quality, if not perfect in degree. And wherein lies the personal power of the Lord Jesus to bind human hearts to Him in devoted love and heroic service? In this, that He realised His own ideal. He was indeed perfect as God is perfect, and in being this He left all His disciples, even such an one as St. Paul, hopelessly behind. But the Divine loftiness of His character does not remove Him beyond reach of our sympathy. We do not lose interest in Him because He is so much better than we are. On the contrary, it is by His excellence, by the τὸ περισσὸν, that He draws us. He is to our hearts the imitable inimitable, holding us at once by aspiration and by admiration.

Among the things which Luke has retained in his report of the hill discourse, otherwise greatly curtailed,

are the law of reciprocity,[1] the warning against judging,[2] and the precept to forgive.[3] Doubtless they owe their preservation in his pages to their perceived affinity with the royal law of love. The Golden Rule finds its strongest expression in Matthew's version. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."[4] But even in the weakened form of Luke, "as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise," the rule preserves its uniqueness as compared with any similar apothegm in the religious literature of the world. For the peculiarity of Christ's form of the rule is that it is expressed in *positive* not in *negative* terms, as in all other known instances. Rabbi Hillel quoted with approval, as summing up the whole law, this sentiment from the book of *Tobit*, "Do to no one what you hate." Confucius, the Chinese sage, living six centuries before Christ, said: "Do not to others what you would not wish done to yourself." These and the like negative maxims move in the region of justice. But the positive counsel of our Lord takes us into the wider region of generosity. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you" is capable of a very wide range of application. We may desire men to do for us *ex gratia* many things which we cannot legally demand: to stretch out a helping hand to us at a severe, perilous crisis in our lives, to speak a word for us when we are misunderstood and maligned, to give us food and harbour when we are fleeing for our lives, a Claverhouse perchance on our

[1] *Luke* vi. 31.
[2] *Luke* vi. 37.
[3] *Luke* vi. 37.
[4] *Matt.* vii. 12.

track. In short the Golden Rule as Jesus put it prescribes not merely just, but magnanimous, benignant, heroic behaviour towards our fellow-men after the pattern set by Himself.

The counsel "Judge not" Luke might have been tempted to omit as a remnant of the antipharisaic polemic, for the Pharisees were prone to the vice of censoriousness, and there was doubtless a mental reference to them in the admonition as originally given. But He knew doubtless that judging was not confined to Pharisees, but was apt to make its appearance even in Christian brotherhoods, as James also knew when he wrote: "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law."[1] This vice has played a portentous baleful part in the Church's history, and made the religion of Jesus, as exhibited by many, wear the aspect of Pharisaism *redivivus*. Even within the bosom of "reformed" Churches there has now and then, here and there, appeared a conceited pietism which has been very conscious of its own superior goodness, and prone not only to judge others to be irregenerate, but even to separate themselves from the common herd of Christians as not worthy to associate with the people of God. And, alas, the members of the self-constituted coteries of spiritual exquisites are too often not by any means so holy as they pretend. The judgers are found out, and justly judged in turn: perceived by the healthy conscience of the Christian community to be pretenders who have a beam

[1] *James* iv. 11.

in their own eye, while they busy themselves with detecting motes in the eye of a brother. This censoriousness of a morbid, self-deceived piety is often a characteristic of crude inexperienced religious profession, and as such it is to be borne with. But in no case is it to be tamely submitted to, as if those who practise the vice were privileged persons who must be allowed to say and do what they please. The pretensions of such should be treated as ridiculous, as a blot on the Christian name, as utterly alien from the spirit of Christ. Judging is one of the chief offences against the law of brotherly love, all the more heinous that it is committed in the name of religion and under the supposed guidance of the Holy Ghost.

"Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven," adds Luke; or, as it stands in the Revised Version: "Release and ye shall be released." Presumably the reference is to moral offences, and the counsel in question is Luke's equivalent for the comment appended to the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew's version: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."[1] The principle involved is obviously a strong buttress to the law of brotherly love. And Christians concerned for their own spiritual well-being will do wisely to lay the principle to heart, and to take it in its broad, plain sense, without theological refinements. So also with kindred moral sentences such as: "Judge not and ye shall not be judged,"[2] or that of St. Paul: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged;"[3] or that other

[1] *Matt.* vi. 15. [2] *Matt.* vii. 1. [3] 1 *Cor.* xi. 31.

saying of our Lord: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.[1] Take all these scriptural sentiments as broad enunciations of great laws of the moral world, operating as surely as the law of gravitation in the physical world. If this be indeed so, how much we have in our power! Judge not others, judge yourself, humble yourself, be ready to forgive, and your own pardon and salvation are sure. You are a child of God, a true son of the Father in heaven, a genuine disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. It will be well with you here and in all worlds, now and for evermore.

[1] *Luke* xviii. 14.

CHAPTER XI

THE CROSS IN SIGHT

FROM the didactic calm of the mountain retreat to the mental tension and moral pathos of the northern wandering it is a long way. At the earlier time many themes engaged the attention of the Master and His disciples,—themes kindred, doubtless, yet distinct: God, Man, Righteousness, Prayer. Now one topic fills the mind of the Master at least, if not of His followers: the *Cross*, clearly visible to Him above the spiritual horizon, and never henceforth out of His view. And the mood and mode of speech vary with the altered situation. Then Jesus was the Teacher in His school wearing a contemplative look, handling all subjects as matters of theory, discussing even the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees in a scientific rather than in a controversial spirit. Now He is the Prophet with a vision of doom staring Him in the face, and filling His soul with solemn feeling. He speaks as one whose time is short to men whom He would prepare for a final crisis, in tones thrilling with emotion.

The disciples never could forget the time and place when and where their Master began first to speak to

them in plain unmistakable terms concerning His death. The vividness of their recollection has left its mark on the evangelic tradition. The Evangelists are not uniformly careful to indicate the localities of the incidents they relate, but two of them distinctly mention whereabouts it was that Jesus first spoke the fateful word, "The Son of man must suffer many things."[1] There was no affinity between the topic and the town, but it *was* near Cæsarea Philippi that the beloved Master began so to speak, and therefore the fact must be mentioned; every feature in the scene indelibly imprinted on the memory must be faithfully reproduced. So Peter would feel when he had occasion to tell the pathetic story, and the realism of the eye-witness has been faithfully preserved in the pages of Mark, whence it found its way into Matthew. The omission of the name in the Third Gospel is one of several indications of the secondary character of his account.[2]

An announcement like that which gave a shock of surprise to the Twelve as they journeyed towards Cæsarea Philippi was not likely to be made once only. If we may say so with reverence, Jesus could not help speaking again and again of a matter which lay so near His heart. Then iteration was necessary for the sake of the disciples. A wise Master repeats his lessons even when the truths communicated are of a theoretical nature; how much more will he deem repetition needful when the subject of instruction is a fact which must vitally affect conduct. A

[1] *Matt.* xvi. 13; *Mark* viii. 27. [2] *Luke* ix. 18.

crisis is at hand which for good or for evil will form the turning point in the lives of these men; how necessary to impress the fact upon them in good time by all possible means, even if it were by monotonous re-statement over and over and over again. Jesus did not hesitate to have recourse to this device, and that circumstance also impressed itself indelibly on the minds of Peter and his companions, as the Evangelic Records show. Three several predictions of the Passion are reported by the Evangelists, even by Luke, who usually avoids repetition of incidents.[1] Monotony is relieved by new features introduced into each successive announcement, as the picture became clearer to the Prophet's eye, or with prudent regard to what the disciples could bear. First the general announcement is made that the Son of man must go to Jerusalem to suffer many things at the hands of the rulers of Israel and be killed; next the ominous hint is given that He is to be *betrayed* into the hands of His murderers; then finally some harrowing details are added as to the "many things" to be endured, with an accompanying intimation that the Gentile authorities are to have a hand in the tragedy.

But more than announcement was necessary; instruction, to help men to whom the harsh intolerable fact was bluntly stated to comprehend, and in some measure to accept, the awful situation. It may be taken for granted that Jesus did everything that was

[1] The first in *Matt.* xvi. 21, *Mark* viii. 31, *Luke* ix. 21; the second in *Matt.* xvii. 22, 23, *Mark* ix. 30–32, *Luke* ix. 43–45; the third in *Matt.* xx. 17–19, *Mark* x. 32–34, *Luke* xviii. 31–34.

possible for this purpose, not contenting Himself with stating on His prophetic authority, So it shall be, but endeavouring to make it clear by all available lines of thought why it so must be; thus adding teaching to prophesying. From the Evangelic Records we gather that teaching and prophesying were combined from the first. Jesus, they report, "began to teach them that the Son of man *must* suffer."[1] This "must" (δεῖ) covers much more than the fact: its inevitableness, as the unavoidable natural effect of causes that were actually at work, its correspondence to what Old Testament history and prophecy might lead one to expect, its congruity with the laws of the spiritual world, or its fitness as an event taking its place in the moral order of the universe under the Providence of God. That all these points of view were present to Christ's own mind we cannot doubt. Whether He would discuss them all with His disciples would depend on His estimate of their capacity to understand. The probability is that while some of His thoughts He made no attempt to communicate, there were others bearing on each aspect of the "must" which He deemed it expedient to utter. On the leaven of the scribes against which He had warned His disciples at the starting of the memorable journey, He might expatiate with hope of being understood, referring to past experiences in illustration of its malignant character. To the copious references in the Old Testament to sufferings endured by the righteous, He might allude with reasonable expectation that they

[1] *Mark* viii. 30.

would enable the disciples to perceive that tribulation overtaking one who had not deserved ill at men's hands was after all no strange unheard-of thing. On these aspects of the subject, therefore, it may be assumed that He spoke, though the records contain very scanty indications of the fact. The ethical rationale of the Passion, the bearing of the "must" on the moral order of the world, is much the most abstruse phase of the problem, and it would not have surprised us if the Gospel had not contained a single saying of Jesus bearing on that recondite topic. And yet on the other hand, if we find in their pages words touching thereon, reported as spoken by Jesus to His disciples in those last days, we do not receive their report incredulously; for, as already said, the presumption is that the Master would do all in His power to make His followers comprehend the situation on all its sides.

Two sayings bearing on the rationale of the Passion are reported as having been uttered by Jesus, one in connection with the first announcement of its approach, the other in connection with the sons-of-Zebedee incident which followed closely on the third. On the former occasion, Jesus, according to the accounts of Matthew and Mark, having in view the opposition of Peter, said to all present, including the Twelve: "Whosoever will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." In the circumstances the word meant that His predicted suffering, so far from being an improbable or absurd suggestion, the bare mention of which was an outrage on right feeling, was simply the exemplification of a universal

law applicable to all who were minded as He was to devote themselves with singleness of heart to the Divine interest. Thus interpreted, the saying was not fitted to make the coming fate of the Master greatly more bearable to disciples as a matter of experience, for there is not much comfort in the thought: I must suffer, and you, if loyal, must all suffer along with me. But it did tend in some measure to make the Master's sufferings more intelligible as a matter of theory. It is always a satisfaction to the intellect when a fact is taken out of a position of isolation and brought under the sway of a general principle. That the disciples fully comprehended the scope of the reflection is not likely, but they would not fail to be struck with it, and it is not at all surprising that they remembered it long after. There is not the least ground for doubting the authenticity of the saying. The reference to the cross is no reason for suspicion, for the mode of punishment it represented would be familiar to all Jews then living, and it might be referred to by Jesus, even without prescience of the manner in which He Himself was to suffer death, simply as the emblem of a cruel and humiliating experience. It makes for the historicity of the saying that the idea it embodies is *ethical*, not theological. One can understand people living in the apostolic age, and especially such as were familiar with Pauline doctrine, imputing to the Lord Jesus words expressive of the theological significance of His death, as a unique event demanding an explanation peculiar to itself. Such was the way in which the apostle Paul viewed

the matter. But such is not the view embodied in the saying in question. The event to be explained is not regarded as isolated, and the theory under which it and the whole class of events to which it belongs is brought, moves in the region of ethics, not of theology. In effect the doctrine taught is that all the godly must suffer persecution. That doctrine the apostolic Church understood, but it was not in terms of it that believers were wont to express their thought concerning the meaning of Christ's death. The saying now under consideration, therefore, was not an importation into the Gospels, but a genuine reminiscence of the *first lesson* taught by the Lord concerning the significance of His Passion.

It is a very important lesson which must form the broad ethical foundation of all theological superstructures that aspire to abiding validity. There may be some respects in which the death of Christ is singular, but there are also respects in which it belongs to a class of facts in the moral world. These common aspects cannot be overlooked without vitiating effect on theological theory. To the category belongs, *suffering for righteousness' sake*. That Jesus so suffered is certain, and that in this He has had many companions is not less so. To see the likeness, however, it is necessary to keep before our minds the most salient instances. With reference to many disciples of the great Master it seems an exaggeration to say that their lot is to bear a cross, in any sense worthy of the name. You must think of the exceptionally faithful men, the moral heroes of history, the prophets, apostles, martyrs, and

confessors, to be fully convinced of the sober truth of the doctrine taught at Cæsarea Philippi. If you take it as applying to all who at any distance follow Christ, then you must either view it as an over-statement, or you must conceive the cross, not as the emblem of great critical tribulations, but rather as the symbol of the petty troubles that constantly befall those who try, however imperfectly, to live a good life.

The latter alternative was adopted by Luke. The introduction into the saying of the word "daily"[1] makes all the difference. Luke's version of the first lesson is manifestly secondary in this respect, and indeed in all respects. His omission of the opposition and consequent rebuke of Peter removes the link connecting the cross of the Master with the cross of the disciple as belonging to the same moral category. In representing the word of the cross as spoken to all, he suggests the experience of the many, rather than that of the few as the sphere of its verification. In representing cross-bearing as a daily business, he withdraws our attention from those rare and capital instances of suffering on account of righteousness which justify the term "cross," and broadly exemplify the truth of the law. In keeping with this treatment of Christ's memorable word to His disciples is his manner of dealing with the whole incident of which it forms a part. His narrative, up to the point at which He introduces it, does not prepare us for so solemn a declaration. We see no reason why Jesus should just then begin to speak about His Passion. Luke's omissions, *e.g.*, of the en-

[1] *Luke* ix. 23.

counter with the Pharisees in respect to ceremonial ablutions, and of their demand for a sign, hide from readers the causes that were steadily working towards a tragic issue. Therefore the intimation that such an issue was inevitable comes upon us as a surprise almost as much as it came upon the disciples. In Luke's conception of the δεῖ the view of our Lord's death as the effect of causes that were in operation all through His public career had little or no place. He seems to have thought chiefly, if not exclusively, of the necessity that Old Testament prophecy should be fulfilled.

More remarkable, because expressing a less familiar thought, is the second contribution Jesus made towards a theory of the Passion: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."[1] It sets the approaching event in a new and brighter light, as not merely a disaster overtaking Jesus because His public conduct, however loyal to God, has aroused deadly hostility among the religious leaders of Israel, but as a source of benefit to many men. Jesus here conceives His death, not as a fate, but as a service, the supreme illustration of the truth that the Son of man came not to be served but to serve. From the connection in which the thought is introduced, indeed, it is clear that the Speaker expects ultimate benefit to Himself from this extraordinary service. It is the way he takes to the place of sovereign. By lowly service He expects to become the greatest. But it is a roundabout way. The many will serve Him because they are conscious

[1] *Matt.* xx. 28; *Mark* x. 45.

He has made them His debtors by His ministering life and death.

There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of this great word. It fits the situation, and admirably crowns the discourse of Jesus to His disciples concerning the true way to greatness. Its originality and grandeur guarantee its authenticity. Then it was to be expected that Jesus would, both for His own comfort and for the consolation of His disciples, do His utmost to invest the harsh fact of His death with "poetic, mystic, spiritual meanings," to put a bright optimistic face on a dark pessimistic outlook. This had been His way all along; His doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood was a signal example of His will and power to introduce sunshine into the darkest experiences of life. It may be taken for granted that the happy habit of mind which asserted itself so triumphantly in the admonition against care in the Hill Teaching, would not desert Him when His own hour of trial came. He would know how to transmute a supreme evil into a supreme good, and to deck His cross with flowers. We see Him engaged in this very work at this time when He gives to His approaching sufferings the poetic names of a cup and a baptism. Why should He not also call it a ransom? That word doubtless has to our ear a theological rather than a poetic sound, and may suggest the doubt: have we not in this term and in the whole saying in which it occurs, a *theologoumenon* of the apostolic age put into the mouth of Jesus? The absence of the saying from Luke's pages, in which the whole Sons-of-Zebedee incident has no place, might be cited

in justification of the doubt. It is such a use of the third Evangelist's omissions that induces me to take pains to point out what I conceive to be the true characteristics of His presentation of the evangelic story. I maintain that when these are properly understood this particular omission ceases to have any value as an argument against the historicity of the Ransom Logion. And to make this as clear as possible I here remark that Luke's Gospel is, by comparison with the other two Synoptists, very deficient in material bearing on the significance of Christ's death. The first lesson on the subject already considered is so altered by him that we hardly recognise it as a lesson. The second contained in the Ransom Logion is wholly omitted. The third lesson also, that taught in connection with Mary's vase of ointment, by the suggestion that her act in anointing Jesus and His act in dying were to be forever associated together as of kindred nature[1] — this too is wanting in the Third Gospel, the whole story being passed over. The only thing that remains is the fourth lesson contained in the words spoken by Jesus at the institution of the Supper: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood *which is shed for you.*" In the judgment of experts in New Testament criticism, it is very doubtful whether even these words had any place in the true text of Luke. In their edition of the Greek Testament, Westcott and Hort enclose within double brackets all that follows "This is my body" in Luke xxii. 19, with the whole of the following verse, ending with the words above quoted. Other well-

[1] *Matt.* xxvi. 13; *Mark* xiv. 9.

known scholars agree with them in thinking that Codex Bezae, which omits the passage, here preserves the original text, and that the words left out in that Codex were introduced by another hand from St. Paul's account of the institution of the Supper in his first epistle to the Corinthians. Into this critical question I cannot here enter, nor have I any desire to pronounce a confident opinion upon it. I simply remark that the omission of the Ransom Logion, and of the saying concerning Mary of Bethany, makes the omission of the bracketed clauses in Luke's report of the institution of the Supper less improbable than it might otherwise appear. Supposing they were omitted, what would be the result? This rather startling one, that Luke's Gospel would not contain a single word of Jesus that could be regarded as a contribution towards explaining the moral or theological significance of His death. The Acts, a companion work to the Third Gospel, contains little or no theology of the cross. Hence, on the hypothesis in question, the state of the case as regards Luke would be this: that throughout his writings there is no trace of St. Paul's theory of atonement, though there is abundant evidence of warm sympathy with the Apostle's Christian universalism.[1] This is a phenomenon which calls for more consideration than it has yet received.

Thus far of the prejudice against the historicity of this saying arising from its omission by Luke. It remains to offer a few remarks on a similar prejudice

[1] The words "which He purchased with His blood," in St. Paul's speech to the Elders of Ephesus (*Acts* xx. 28), contains the nearest approach to a definite theological theory.

created by its apparently theological character. Is it credible, one may ask, that so definite and developed a theological theory as to the significance of our Lord's death could come from the lips of the Lord Himself? By way of reply the previous question might reasonably be raised: *Have* we here developed theology, or even theology at all? Is the word "ransom" necessarily used in a technical theological sense exclusively applicable to the death of Christ? May it not be employed in a general ethical sense applicable to all whose lives are sacrificed in a good cause with more or less beneficent effect? In a recently published commentary I find this comment on the passage: "All that is required by the statement, not in the way of minimizing it, but to fill out its meaning is, that his life becomes the price by which men are freed from their bondage. The soldiers in the American civil war gave their lives as a λύτρον for the slaves, and every martyr's death is a λύτρον. There may be more than this involved in the death of the Redeemer, but more than this is not involved in His words here."[1] This, to men accustomed to the developed theories of dogmatic theology, may seem a very meagre interpretation, but it is a perfectly legitimate one, and the idea it finds in the text is true as far as it goes, and apposite to the connection of thought. And when the historicity of the saying is in question, we are neither bound nor entitled to charge its terms with a plethora of theological mean-

[1] *The Gospel according to St. Mark* by Rev. Ezra P. Gould, S.T.D., in the International Critical Commentary published by Messrs. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, and Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

ing; we may and must understand them as used in a natural, spontaneous, non-technical, fluid sense, as expressing a great broad truth relating to the moral order of the world. Such a truth would be this: that the moral and spiritual progress of the world is never signally advanced without sacrifice, and that those whose lot it is to make the needful sacrifice may in an intelligible sense be said to lay down their lives a ransom for many. The question may of course be raised: What is the ultimate reason of this unquestionable fact? Why is it that moral progress on the great scale is so costly, and by what categories of thought can the cost be best estimated and understood? This is a problem for theologians and philosophers. The saying ascribed to our Lord sets the problem, but there is nothing to show that He meant His words to be a contribution towards its solution.

From the faithful narratives of the Evangelists, it appears that the words of the Master, taken even in their broadest and most obvious sense, made little impression at the time on the minds of His disciples. They soon recovered from the depression caused by sombre anticipations, and with the buoyancy of children rebounded to congenial light-mindedness. That a crisis was coming they believed, but they hoped it would be very different from that pointed at by their Master's gloomy forebodings. While He spake of a cross they dreamt of crowns, and vain thoughts awoke ambitious passions which ended in unseemly wranglings. Hence Jesus had two tasks to perform in those last months: to expound under its varied aspects the doctrine of

sacrifice, and to discipline the unruly tempers of His followers.

Of the efforts made by our Lord in this second direction the Gospels give some interesting accounts. The memorable words to which the saying last considered belongs, wherein the great law, distinction to be attained by service, was enunciated, is a precious sample of the sublime schooling to which the Master subjected His scholars. Thanks to James and John and their mother for creating, through their foolish aspiration, a fitting opportunity for the utterance of such never-to-be-forgotten thoughts.

This was not the first lesson of the kind the disciples had received. They had been to school already in Capernaum just after their return from the excursion to Cæsarea Philippi. For on the way home they had been disputing on the question: Who is the greatest? and their Master had felt that no time must be lost in dealing with the new spirit of ambition that had appeared among them. Mark's account reproduces the scene very vividly before us. Jesus, he tells us, "sat down and called the Twelve,"[1] both actions betokening a resolute purpose to school the disciples in humility. The Master takes His seat, the teacher's posture, calls His scholars with a magisterial tone, calls them as the *Twelve*, destined to an important vocation and needing thorough discipline to be of service in it. Everything points to a great effort lasting probably for a considerable time, hours, during which Jesus doubtless gave expression to many weighty thoughts, all serving

[1] *Mark* ix. 35.

the same general purpose, such thoughts as we find reported with greatest fulness in Matthew's Gospel.[1] It is conceivable that the first Evangelist in this part of his narrative follows his usual method of grouping words of kindred import irrespective of their historical connection. But there is nothing in the chapter which might not have been spoken on the occasion indicated in the opening verse. Full as Matthew's report is, even he has not given all. Luke contributes nothing peculiar to him, his account being very meagre. Mark, however, has preserved a very remarkable saying, not found in Matthew's record, which commends itself at once as an integral part of the Capernaum admonition. It is the Logion concerning *Salting*.[2] Part of it: "Salt is good, but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it?" is found in other connections in Matthew and Luke (in Matthew v. 13 and in Luke xiv. 34, 35), but the remainder is peculiar to the Second Gospel. The passage has its difficulties, critical and exegetical, but the general sense is plain. The drift is: "Salting in some form is inevitable, in the form of self-discipline it is indispensable. Every man must be salted somehow, either with the unquenchable fire of gehenna or with the fire of severe self-sacrifice. Wise is he who chooses the latter alternative. Without salting in the sense of self-discipline no one can perform the function of being a salt to the world. The morally undisciplined, subject to ambitious desires, are a salt without a savour, useless, worthless." This was a seasonable thing to say to

[1] *Matt.* xviii. [2] *Mark* ix. 49–50.

men whose vocation was to be Apostles of the Christian religion. It pointed to a character thoroughly purged from selfish passions as an indispensable condition of future usefulness in the exercise of apostolic functions. And there was another word needed for the present condition of the disciple-circle distracted by internal jealousies, its harmony disturbed by the dispute about places of distinction. They could not afford to be at war among themselves, a small band facing a hostile world. Peace was indispensable. How was it to be restored and maintained? The prescription is again, *salting*. "Have salt in yourselves and be at peace one with another." In the first place the disciples are thought of as themselves salt for the world, but now they are viewed as the subjects of the salting process. They are summoned to see to it that their own inward man be duly salted, in order that they may be able to live at peace among themselves and avoid further unseemly wrangling. And as it was ambition that led to a breach of the peace, so the salting will consist in getting rid of that evil spirit at all hazards, even though it should mean excision of an offending member. This salting is not to be confounded with the cross-bearing of faithful disciples of which Jesus had spoken on a previous occasion. Cross-bearing is the tribulation that comes on all who follow closely in the footsteps of Christ. Salting is the discipline of self-denial necessary to make a man a follower of Christ worthy of the name.

When we think of all the stern words spoken by our Lord at this time to His chosen companions, we are as

profoundly impressed with the intense moral earnestness of the *Master* as we were with the wisdom of the *Teacher*, while studying the doctrine taught on the mountain-top. The Teaching on the Hill opened with a series of sentences setting forth the kind of men who are the true citizens of the Kingdom and partakers of its blessedness. Taken in the abstract, the Beatitudes present a beautiful object of mental contemplation, a poetic ideal whose charm is unfading. But one might expect even the Divine Artist who drew the fair picture to be content with something short of the ideal in practice, especially in the case of His own followers. Yet He was not. He meant it seriously, and expected all who were about Him to take it not less seriously. To His own friends He said: "Unless ye change, and from ambitious men striving for prominence become as the children, ye shall not even enter the Kingdom, not to speak of being great there.[1] If any man, even if it be one of you, in his pride and selfish pursuit of his own advancement, despise or trample under foot a 'little one' his appropriate doom will be to be thrown with a heavy millstone round his neck into the deepest part of the sea.[2] If ye be not placable, ready to forgive *from the heart* a brother who has offended, my heavenly Father will treat you as the King in the parable treats the unmerciful servant."[3] How uncompromising! What a passion for moral purity! How profound the conviction in the mind of the Lord Jesus, that without a disciplined spirit thoroughly schooled into the virtue of the Kingdom these men can be of no use, and that a

[1] *Matt.* xviii. 3. [2] *Matt.* xviii. 6. [3] *Matt.* xviii. 35.

society of such men can only be a corrupt, worthless community, on which the eye of the Divine Father cannot rest with satisfaction. Alas! organised Christianity has at all times borne too close a resemblance to the disciple-circle at this period. Church History gives tragic emphasis to the counsel, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." Scandals, offences, quarrels, divisions innumerable, all for lack of salt. But let us turn from the humbling story, and fix our eyes on a more edifying subject of contemplation. Let the weakness of disciples serve as a foil to the moral strength of their Master. The inner history of the Jesus-circle in those weeks is disenchanting enough. There is a traitor in the camp, who, having laid the Master's foreboding of danger more to heart than the rest, meditates escape from an ill-fated brotherhood by playing false to its Head. Three have been favoured by being chosen for special companionship with the Master during a season of retirement, and either they grow vain, or their brother disciples become jealous. Two try to snatch the first places for themselves, and the ten are indignant. While the Master inculcates kindness to the little ones, His scholars have to confess an act of arrogance and intolerance committed against one who had given no just cause of offence.[1] How Jesus towers in moral grandeur above these little men whom He condescends to make companions! Incapable of disloyalty, He marches straight towards His doom. The glories of the hill of Transfiguration do not dazzle His eyes. "Tell no man of the vision." Primacy,

[1] *Mark* ix. 38; *Luke* ix. 49.

greatness, is not His watch-word, but Service even unto death. Monopoly receives no countenance from Him: "Forbid him not!" Here is the moral sublime not merely touched for a moment, but consistently sustained. Christians! bow in lowly reverence before that transcendent character, and remember that ye are worthy of your name in proportion as the mind, the ethical spirit of Jesus, dwells in you. That spirit is the true salt which promotes peace, and conditions power. The moral tone of a Church is the measure of its Christianity and of its spiritual influence.

CHAPTER XII

GETHSEMANE

THE experience of our Lord in the Garden was a rehearsal of the Passion. In that hour of agony He realised in thought and feeling all that He was about to suffer. Privacy is the privilege of such as pass through deep waters of soul-trouble, and reverence raises a monitory finger, protesting against intrusion. But Jesus took three with Him into the sacred enclosure, and through them all the world has been made acquainted with the solemn scene. The sufferer did not desire to screen Himself from observation. He would have His followers see Him in His weakness as well as in His strength. He was not ashamed of His human infirmity, nor guided by a false pride whispering: "Let no mortal man see me with a troubled countenance." He counselled and practised secrecy when publicity would give to conduct the aspect of a theatrical performance meant to win applause, but not when it was more likely to bring reproach than praise. Hide your good deeds, He said to His disciples. Hide tears: on no account allow the woman in you to appear, He did not say. Nor did He act on this stoical maxim. "Jesus

wept" at the grave of Lazarus. He let it be known that His soul was "exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Sentimentality, effeminacy, had no place in His nature, but womanliness had. There was a soft tender woman in Him, as well as a brave heroic man, and He was content that all that was in Him should be known. In this unreserved self-manifestation lies the truth and charm of His character. He has nothing to hide, He can afford to be seen through and through; the exposure of that which men are tempted to hide only heightens our admiration and our love. Therefore we may not hesitate to consider what is recorded of our beloved Lord's experience in Gethsemane. It is part of the picture presented to our view in the mirror of the Gospels, and it completes the portraiture. We have seen Jesus in His zeal as an evangelist, in His benevolence as a Healer, in His wisdom as a Teacher, in His faithfulness as a Master, in His courage as the foe and critic of a false but pretentious and tyrannical pietism; it is well that we see Him finally when His strength seems to have gone from Him and He is become like any other man. It will help us to realise that our Saviour was indeed "in all points tempted like as we are — yet without sin."

Another view of the matter is of course possible. The infirmity of Christ's humanity is wholly free from sin in reality and for such as can understand it. But apparently? and for such as have not the necessary spiritual insight to appreciate its true character? Is there not a risk of such an experience as that in the

Garden being misunderstood? Were it not good, therefore, to throw a veil over it by total omission or qualified report? Let the agony be a holy mystery known, if at all, only to the initiated. Peter, James, and John may be there, but let them keep what they see and hear to themselves.

Some such feeling seems to have prevailed in certain parts of the primitive Church. Indications are not wanting that Luke's account of the incident took its shape under the influence of a prudent reserve. These will be pointed out in due course. Meantime, our attention must be given to the narratives of Matthew and Mark which betray the influence of the other view, *viz.*, that there was something tending to edification to be learned from a frank recital of what befell Jesus during the hour preceding His apprehension. The general features of the story are the same in both; Mark's version is, on the whole, the most realistic.

The essential features of the incident, as reported in the first two Gospels, are these:[1] From the supper chamber, in Jerusalem, Jesus goes forth towards the Mount of Olives, accompanied by His disciples. On the way, the shadow of the cross begins to fall on His spirit, and He begins to speak to the disciples of the panic which is about to overtake them. They arrive at an enclosed property called Gethsemane; probably because it contained an oil press. He bids the outer circle of eight sit down there and wait His return, then enters the garden, taking with Him

[1] *Matt.* xxvi. 36–45; *Mark* xiv. 32–41.

the inner circle of three — Peter, James, and John — bidding them halt at a certain point, and asking them not merely to wait, but to watch: "with me," Matthew adds, suggesting a desire on their Master's part for their sympathy to sustain Him through the crisis. While giving them this direction, He makes a full confession of His mental distress: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." The access of this soul-sorrow is indicated in these terms: "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy-hearted." He *began*. Jesus had long known, and had often with realistic plainness spoken of, what was to befall Him. Yet the vivid sense of what it all meant came upon Him at this time as an appalling revelation. The beginning referred to by the Evangelists probably points to the moment at which distress became visible. The inward beginning came earlier, but was concealed till the following had been reduced to three, when Jesus allowed his inward state to appear to those who, He hoped, might be able to bear the revelation and give Him a little sympathy. Mark's description of the on-coming of the eclipse is very strong. He uses three descriptive words for Matthew's two, one being peculiar to him. Jesus is represented as not only sorrowful and heavy-hearted, but amazed.

Jesus then advances further into the garden, falls all His length on the ground, and begins to pray. Both Evangelists give the words spoken, with slight variations, Mark prefixing an indication of its gist, *viz.*, that "if it were possible the hour might pass from Him." There are three successive acts of

prayer, all having the same burden: if it be possible let the cup pass. Between the acts Jesus comes back to the three disciples, hoping to find them sympathetically watchful. Instead He finds them asleep the first time, and again the second time, in spite of His reproachful word, and earnest admonition to watch and pray for themselves, lest they be overtaken by sudden temptation. Returning the third time He bids them sleep on now and rest, adding according to Mark: "It is enough." He knew, for He immediately went on to state, that the moment for His apprehension was at hand, so giving to the permission to sleep an ironical meaning. And yet it was not mere irony. It meant, "You may sleep on now without interruption so far as I am concerned. I no longer need your sympathetic watchfulness, I have conquered in the struggle, I am prepared to meet the hour and drink the cup."

The struggle had been very real while it lasted. All signs point to an even tremendous conflict: the craving for sympathy, the confession of mental distress, the prostrate attitude, the thrice repeated prayer, the pressing importunate, "if it be possible." Yet what room for struggle in a mind already made up? How can the suppliant conceive, as even abstractly possible, escape from a doom which months ago He clearly perceived and openly declared to be inevitable? It must be, δεῖ, He had said again and again to His disciples. And had He not taken pains to explain to them the grounds of the "must," enlarging now on the malice of the scribes, anon on

the predictions of ancient Psalmists and Prophets, at another time on the facts and laws of the moral world? Has the wise Teacher forgot His own instructions? No, but it is one thing to teach, another to apply the lesson to your own case when the dark hour of trial comes. The "must" proclaimed at Cæsarea Philippi, and often reiterated, might be rooted in the wicked purpose of the scribes, in ancient prophecy, and in the moral order of the universe, but it was contrary to the order of human nature, which rose in rebellion against that triple necessity. Scribes, Prophets, great moral laws might cry "must" and the intellect and the conscience acknowledge the truth of their cry, but the flesh and the sensitive human soul recalcitrate, and in His distraction the sufferer can but exclaim: If it be possible! And this is not the first time He has felt the painful internal conflict, though it is the first time He has allowed it to appear. That stern word to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan," shows that the struggle was on Him even at Cæsarea Philippi. The disciple's "this shall not be unto thee" had voiced the instinctive recoil of His own heart. The agony in the Garden is but the final conflict with a weakness of which the Faithful One has been conscious all along.

No wonder the conflict was keen. The cup Jesus had to drink was full of bitter ingredients. Death, death in youth, death by injustice, death by violence, death in a form horrible to think of, death brought about by conspiracy between a false disciple and unprincipled priests, death as a victim of human sin under

all its varied aspects, death in utter loneliness, deserted by all his chosen companions. But God, His Father, was He not with Him, and was His presence not enough to sweeten the cup, or at least to mitigate greatly its bitterness? Yes, the Father was with Him, and He realised the fact all through the hour of trial. From first to last the filial consciousness was in the ascendant. The key-note of filial trust was struck in the first act of prayer, in its opening phrase: "O my Father." His Father's heart is His place of refuge in this hour of dire distress; His Father's love and His Father's wisdom and power, and the boundless possibilities at His command for extricating those who trust in Him and serve Him from the most desperate situations. No way of escape had appeared open to His own view, all things had seemed to unite in saying, It must be; but: "all things are possible unto thee, O Father." Jesus addresses His Father not as the Appointer of the cup, but rather as the only Being in all the world who is able to take it away. And yet with His habitual view of Divine Providence, He could not conceive of His Father's relation to the cup as merely permissive. He knew that unless the Father had put the cup into His hand it would not have been there. "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?"[1] Thus the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood which He had taught His disciples becomes to Himself now a two-

[1] *John* xviii. 11. The words quoted are all that remain of the Gethsemane experience in the Fourth Gospel. They indicate the triumphant result of an unrecorded struggle, and imply knowledge of the struggle on the part of the Evangelist.

edged sword, a source at once of perplexity and of consolation. This bitter cup, my Father hath put it into my hand, and that adds to its bitterness. Not merely men, friends and foes, are against me, but my God, my Father seems to forsake me. Yet in the mere fact that my Father wills it, I find sweet comfort, for all He does is well. Here is an antinomy solved by faith, not insoluble even for thought. Piety always contrives to solve such antinomies, but the reflective thought of those who are confronted with them is not always able to suggest adequate theoretical solutions. The prophets of Israel were in this position. They believed that God was righteous, and in their experience He appeared to them most unrighteous. They held on to faith in the Divine righteousness, but they could not explain the conflicting phenomena of Providence ; these remained for them an inscrutable mystery. Was it so with our Lord Jesus? No ; by thought as well as by faith He surmounted the antinomy. He understood that it was a law and not an accident that the righteous suffer in this world. He understood moreover that it was a beneficent law : that the sufferings of the righteous issued in good even to the unrighteous ; that the death of the just is a ransom for the souls of the unjust. Doubtless He understood also, though this does not appear from the Gospel records, that the sufferer Himself gains from His hard experience. "Perfected by suffering" is the formula offered by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews to justify the thesis : "It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, to subject the Captain of Salvation to a painful and

humbling experience."[1] It is a true, beautiful, and helpful thought which has not received from systematic theology so full a recognition as it deserves. It means that by His curriculum of temptation and suffering Jesus was perfected for the office and function of Captain of Salvation, because thereby He was subjected to an experience which called into play the virtues of faith, patience, obedience, and sympathy, qualifying Him to be a merciful High Priest worthy of, and winning, the unhesitating trust of sinful men.

The victory of our Lord in Gethsemane consisted not merely in submission to the will of His Father, but in the intelligent acceptance of that will as good, wise, well-grounded. That was what He had achieved by the three-fold act of prayer. That three distinct devotional acts were necessary is no ground of reproach. Complete mastery in thought and feeling in such crises of temptation comes to no man without prolonged effort. It is the result of a process with distinguishable stages. It is not to be supposed that in the three acts, words and mood were absolutely identical. We might infer that they were from the statements of the Evangelists, especially from that of Mark, but the inference would be hasty. Neither they nor the three disciples, who were the ultimate source of information, were able to tell precisely all that happened. Peter, James, and John heard a few words in which the name "Father" was most distinct, and they gathered that the burden of all their Master said was, "Help me to say, Thy will be done." Each act doubtless had its

[1] *Heb.* ii. 10.

distinctive character, by each in succession a step in advance was taken. In the first, nature found relief by unreserved utterance "with strong crying and tears" of all it had to say against the "cup." When this wave of emotion had dashed itself against the shore, there would come a moment of calm during which the sufferer would naturally go back to the three, seeking a little comfort in the presence of loved ones. Then another wave began to raise its head; the mood of wrestling and the need of solitude returned. Again prostration and lifting up of the soul to God; but this time not in mere passionate outpouring of nature's revolt. Rather an endeavour to collect thought and summon into consciousness all that helped to see that the cup must be drank, and that however bitter it was wholesome. Of this change in tone there is a perceptible trace in the words which Matthew makes our Lord utter in His second prayer: "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." It was first: "Oh that the cup might pass!" but now it is: "I perceive it cannot, though it be bitter." Again an interlude of calm after clear insight attained and a second visit to the three. And the final stage? It is: "Thy will be done, I will drink the cup. I see it must be, and I see that it is well. I resist no more."

The thrice repeated prayer in Gethsemane, thus viewed, is manifestly not chargeable with that *battology* against which Jesus had warned His disciples. It is not a case of vain repetition in hope to be heard through much speaking. It is the case of an earnest

soul wrestling with itself in the presence of God, whose good-will is never doubted, and making steady progress in self-conquest; first exhausting passion by expression, then bringing reason into play, and finally, with all that is within, saying: Amen, God's good will be done. In his fine exposition of the Gethsemane incident, Calvin rebuts the charge of battology by the remark that: "Christ teaches us by His example that we ought not to be discouraged or become weary of praying when we do not at once obtain our desires." The moral is good, but not apposite. When Jesus taught His disciples by parables to persevere in prayer, He meant them to persist in asking the same thing, surely believed to be a thing God was willing to grant, *e.g.*, the Holy Spirit, aye and until they at length obtained it, though it should not be till after the lapse of years. But in the prayers of Gethsemane Jesus did not repeat Himself. He began with one thing and ended with another. What He sought at first was deliverance from death; what He at length obtained was deliverance from the fear of death. The lesson to be learned, therefore, is rather to bring our trouble into the presence of God, and to remain there till the dark cloud lifts and the sunshine returns.

Thus far of the solemn scene in the garden as it is described in the pages of Matthew and Mark. Let us turn now to the narrative in Luke. From it, as it stands in the Authorised Version, comes the traditional name for this sore trial of our Lord, the "agony," but if we omit the part of the narrative in which that word occurs (verses 43, 44) what remains gives us no

adequate conception of an experience to which such a term could be fitly applied.

Leaving out these verses, the report contained in the Third Gospel is as follows:

Chap. xxii. v. 39 "And He came out, and went, as He was wont, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples also followed Him.

v. 40 "And when He was at the place He said unto them: Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

v. 41 "And He withdrew from them about a stone's cast, and kneeling He prayed,

v. 42 "Saying, Father! if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

v. 45 "And when He rose up from His prayer and came to His disciples He found them sleeping for sorrow.

v. 46 "And He said to them: Why sleep ye, rise and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

The differences between this account and the companion narratives are obvious, and their combined effect is to present a very subdued view of the occurrence. Among the more important variations are these: First, the introduction of the expression "as He was wont," the effect of which is to deprive this par-

ticular visit to the garden of special significance. Had we only Luke's report, it would not occur to us that anything very remarkable was going to happen. Next, in so far as any particular interest attaches to the occasion, it seems to centre in the disciples rather than in their Master. In the other two Gospels Jesus says: Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder. Here He bids the disciples pray with the view of warding off temptation, as if the need for prayer were on their side only. Then the Master retires about a stone's cast, not merely from the greater number but from them all; for here there is no mention of Jesus taking the three along with Him into the interior recesses of the garden. They were taken to be sympathetic company, but as Christ's need of sympathy has not been indicated, that feature in Luke's narrative naturally falls away. With it disappears also the unreserved confession of mental distress made to the three. There is nothing in Luke corresponding to the "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death" of Matthew and Mark. In harmony with this omission is the manner in which the praying of Jesus is dealt with. It is not passed over, but it is slightly touched on. The Master's wrestling in prayer is not the outstanding fact; He simply prays as well as His disciples. The gesture is *kneeling*, not as in Matthew and Mark, self-prostration on the ground. And there is only a single act of prayer. Having calmly uttered the petition, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will but thine be done," Jesus rises from His prayer and returns to His disciples whom He finds sleeping "for sorrow."

And what He says to them is in keeping with the whole preceding representation of the event, as constituting a crisis for the disciples, rather than for their Master. Not a word of complaint because they had failed to *watch;* only a gentle reminder that it was not a time for sleeping, but for praying against the access of temptation.

These features of Luke's account all hang together, presenting a perfectly coherent story, and making a quite definite impression, *viz.*, that the Gethsemane experience was indeed a crisis, but a crisis for the Twelve rather than for Jesus. Turning now to the two omitted verses, what shall we say of them? That they are out of keeping with their context, and intrude themselves into an incongruous narrative like a vein of igneous rock piercing through a stratified formation. They are, as is well known to critics, of very doubtful genuineness, tested by documentary evidence, being omitted by some most important manuscripts of the Greek Testament, and by many ancient versions. The external evidence against them is admittedly strong, but stronger still in my judgment is the internal evidence arising from the manifest incongruity between the picture they suggest and that presented in the rest of the narrative. Here we have an agony, or desperate struggle, a mortal weakness, demanding and receiving supernatural aid, a bloody sweat falling in great drops from the forehead to the ground; there no signs of distress, weakness, fear, or exhausting combat, but throughout calmness, composure, self-mastery. The question, observe, is not as to the historic truth of

the added particulars. They may form a genuine element of the evangelic tradition as to what befell our Lord in Gethsemane. The point insisted on is that the sentences containing these details have no proper place in Luke's account. They did not come from his hand, they do not harmonise with the general spirit and tendency of his Gospel as a whole and of this particular part of his narrative. They have been added by another hand with a view to supplement, I might even say to correct, his account. The note of correction may be detected in the expression "He prayed *more earnestly*." It betrays a feeling that the praying of Jesus as previously described lacks intensity. The feeling was well founded. There is no trace of intensity in the reported behaviour of Jesus up to this point; all witnesses rather to calm self-control. But from Luke's point of view that was not a defect; therefore, it is not from him that the notice of an altered tone emanates, but from one who knew that the experience in the garden was a much more serious matter than it appeared in the original narrative. The foreign origin of the correction is betrayed by its coming in too late. The intensity should have come in at the beginning. It is altogether improbable that the prayer of Jesus was languid and half-hearted at first, and that He grew earnest as He went on. That is the way often with us, but it would be far otherwise with our Lord at that tremendous hour; first, an unrestrained outburst of passionate resistance, then, and then only, tranquil submission attained through resolute struggle.

On these grounds I regard it as certain that verses

43, 44 formed no part of the Third Gospel as it came from Luke's hand. And I do not think it serves any good purpose to disguise the fact by retaining it as part of the text against the best critical judgment, as has been done in the Revised Version. It simply tends to prevent readers from observing the peculiar characteristics of Luke's account as compared with the versions of Matthew and Mark. To make these prominent, doubtless, may in some measure conflict with the aims of those whose supreme concern is to harmonise the Evangelists. But the pressing interest of our time is historicity, not harmony. That the sense of historicity may be strengthened by the critical ascertainment of what may be called the personal equation of each Evangelist, I have already endeavoured to show.[1] The general statement then made is not without application to the case before us. Luke's account of the "agony" in the garden, in which there is no trace of agony, shows that in certain circles within the church of the apostolic or subapostolic age a tone of feeling prevailed to which it would have appeared unfit that Jesus should be represented as afraid to die, or as passionately recoiling from the awful ordeal through which He was about to pass. Where this feeling was so strong that to disregard it might involve the risk of shaking faith in the Saviour's devotion to His redeeming work, the task of a historian concerned equally for truth and for edification became a delicate one. The resultant of the two forces counterworking each other could hardly fail to be either a subdued report of

[1] *Vide* chap. iii., towards the close.

the experience in the garden, such as we have in the authentic narrative of Luke, or a bare statement of the triumphant result of an unrecorded struggle, such as we have in John, in the words "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" And a gain to the interest of historicity does distinctly accrue from carefully noting these two ways of treating an event in our Lord's earthly life in deference to local exigencies of edification. We learn thereby where to look for the full objective historic fact, even to the narratives of Evangelists exempt from the pressure under which the companion accounts were compiled. If you want to know what really befell our Lord in the garden, read, first, Mark and Matthew; then read Luke, clearly understanding that you have to do with a subdued account; then finally take up John, and learn from him the resolute mind with which Jesus issued from Gethsemane.

That the narratives of the Third and Fourth Gospels took shape under a religious influence of the kind described, is a hypothesis suggested to explain certain characteristics observable in them. It must be taken for what it is worth. Assuming its truth, I do not call in question the legitimacy of the methods by which Evangelists sought to meet local and temporary religious needs. I only remark that it was well for the permanent universal needs of the Church that four Gospels and not merely two have been preserved. For we should have lost much if the weakness of Christ, as He passed through the valley of the shadow of death, had remained unknown; if He had appeared in the evan-

gelic tradition as one who prayed only once concerning the "cup," or as one who did not need to pray at all. Preternatural divine superiority to fear and to suffering is sublime and imposing, but a Jesus acquainted with a very real fear, and soul-distress even unto death, is very human, and a veritable Brother. A weak human Christ has religious value as well as a strong Divine Christ. That we see, but not we only. There were those even in the first Christian age who understood it well. Witness the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. How strongly he asserts the infirmity of Jesus in connection with the scene in Gethsemane, representing Him as offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death.[1] The interest in which He does this is that he may thereby prove how far Jesus was from being a usurper of the priestly office. Instead of taking this honour to Himself, He was rather in that Gethsemane experience, as viewed by the writer, saying in effect, *Nolo pontifex fieri*, saying it not *pro formâ*, in mock humility, but with *tremendous earnestness* and *unmistakable sincerity*. It is a fine thought, one of many in the Epistle evincing a strong grasp of the fact and the moral glory of Christ's earthly humiliation. That grasp the writer did not share with his readers. They saw in the humiliation of Jesus, viewed as the Christ and the Son of God, simply a stumbling-block to their faith, whence arose an imperious necessity for one who wished to aid them to do his best to set that aspect of our Lord's earthly life in its true

[1] *Heb.* v. 7.

light. From the Gospel of Luke and the Epistle to the Hebrews taken together it may be inferred that inability to understand the religious significance of the humiliation prevailed extensively in the early Church. One may wonder why the two writers adopted such different methods of dealing with the situation; the Evangelist succumbing to it, so to speak, the author of the Epistle manfully grappling with it in hope of communicating to his readers a new view of the whole matter. The explanation may in part be that the former possessed a less degree of insight than the latter. But it must also be remembered that the tasks of the two writers determined the paths they must respectively take. Luke was writing a history, the unknown author of Hebrews was writing an epistle. Luke could only relate, the author of *Hebrews* had a free hand, and could argue and explain. He could state the fact strongly, because the more strongly it was put the better it proved his thesis. Where the fact could not be explained, or connected with a theory, and yet was thought to stand very much in need of explanation, the alternative left was to state it weakly or omit it altogether.

The writer of *Hebrews* not only states the fact of Christ's struggle strongly, but points its moral clearly. He saw in that tragic experience a Son learning obedience to the will of His Father which appointed that through suffering He should become the Author of eternal salvation. Let us bow in lowly reverence before Him who so loyally learnt the hard lesson! And may God give us grace to obey Him as He obeyed His Father, that we may be of the grand army which the great Captain leads to Glory! Amen.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CHRISTIAN PRIMER

"SUFFER the children to come unto me," said Jesus. It is with a view to fulfil this command that I write this concluding chapter. It is my desire that the children also may see Jesus "with open face." Existing Catechisms do not accomplish this good object. In them Jesus is seen only through the somewhat opaque veil of theology. I do not quarrel with theology, but it should come last, not first. Theology is for full-grown men, not for children. The Jesus of the Gospels is for all. There is indeed much in the Gospels also that is beyond the comprehension of early years. But they contain much suited to young capacities, quite enough to enable children to know Jesus well, and to love Him with all their hearts.

To gather out of the Gospels this Gospel for the children is my present aim. If I include in my Primer some things young people cannot fully understand, I trust there will be found nothing in it to which they can attach no meaning. I arrange the material in Catechetical form.

1. Who was Jesus?
   He was the Son of Mary of Nazareth in Galilee whose husband Joseph was a carpenter.

2. What is the meaning of the name Jesus?
   It means "Saviour," for the mission of Jesus was to save men from their sins.
3. What happened to Jesus when he was twelve years old?
   He went up to Jerusalem to the passover with His parents, found His way into the temple where the doctors taught, and was there when His parents left to go home.
4. What did He say to His mother when she found Him?
   "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" Luke ii. 49.
5. What was the early occupation of Jesus?
   When He grew up to manhood He became a carpenter.
6. Why did He leave this occupation?
   Because the Spirit of God told Him He must now enter upon His higher work as a religious teacher.
7. How did He enter upon His higher work?
   He left Nazareth and went southwards towards the mouth of the Jordan, to be baptized by a prophet named John.
8. What happened to Jesus after His baptism?
   He saw the heavens cleft and the Spirit of God as a dove descending upon Him. He also heard a voice out of heaven saying: "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased."

9. Where did Jesus go after His baptism?
   He returned to Galilee to begin teaching, and thus

a "people which sat in darkness saw a great Light." Matthew iv. 16.

10. Where did Jesus preach?

In the *synagogues* in which pious Jews met to worship God on the Sabbath days.

11. Did Jesus preach often there?

Yes. "He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee preaching." Mark i. 39.

12. What was His text in the synagogue of *Nazareth?*

It was taken from Isaiah lxi. and these were the words: — "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Luke iv. 18, 19.

13. What impression did His discourse make on the hearers?

They all marvelled, for the words He spoke then, as in all the synagogues, were "words of grace." Luke iv. 22.

14. Did Jesus preach only in the synagogues?

No, He preached in the synagogues at the beginning, but afterwards in the streets, or the highways, or in any place where men gathered to hear him.

15. Did many come to hear Him?

Yes, very many, for the common people loved to hear Him, and He not only preached to them but healed their sick.

16. Did He heal many?

Yes, very many, and of all manner of diseases. In Capernaum one Sabbath evening, at sunset, they brought unto Him all that were sick and He healed them all. Mark i. 32, 33.

17. How was He able to do this?

"The power of the Lord was with Him to heal." Luke v. 17.

18. What ancient oracle was fulfilled by this healing ministry?

"Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases." Matthew viii. 17.

19. Who were the publicans?

They were the men who collected the taxes for the Roman government. They were much disliked, because they were often unjust, and because they were the servants of a foreign power from which the Jews longed to be free.

20. Did Jesus dislike the publicans?

No, He pitied them, preached to them also, and even ate with them, and with people whom good folks called "the Sinners."

21. Did other religious teachers treat publicans and sinners so?

No, they shrank from them with abhorrence.

22. Why did Jesus differ so from other teachers and religious people?

Because He had a marvellously loving heart.

23. What did the religious people of Capernaum say when they saw Jesus meeting and eating with the publicans and sinners?

They asked "How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" Mark ii. 16.

24. What answer did Jesus give to their question?
He said: "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous but sinners." Mark ii. 17.

25. What else did He say in His defence?
At another time He said: "To whom little is forgiven the same loveth little." Luke vii. 47.

26. What did He mean by this?
He meant that a great sinner, like the woman who came into Simon's house to anoint His feet with precious oil, when pardoned, loves the Saviour much, and that one, who like Simon, thinks himself a little sinner, loves the Saviour little.

27. Did He make any other defence for being kind to the sinful?
Yes, He once said by means of parables, What joy there is in finding things lost!

28. What is a parable?
It is a story of common life made up to teach a truth of the spiritual life.

29. What parables did Jesus make to teach the joy of finding things lost?
He made three parables: one about a *lost sheep*, another about a *lost coin*, a third about a *lost son*.

30. What is the parable of the *Lost Sheep?*
"A certain man had a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them left the ninety and nine in the

wilderness, and went after the lost one till he found it. And when he found it he laid it on his shoulders with joy. And when he came home he told his neighbours, and they were all pleased that he had found the lost sheep." Luke xv. 3–7.

31. What is the parable of the *Lost Coin?*

"A very poor woman had ten small pieces of silver money, and lost one of them. She lit a lamp, swept the house, and sought till she found it. In her joy she told her neighbours and they all rejoiced with her." Luke xv. 8–10.

32. What is the parable of the *Lost Son?*

It is a much longer story, too long to tell. But it was about a son who got money from his father and went away and wasted it in a distant land, and so became poor as a beggar, and in his misery thought he had better go back to his father's house. He did, and his father, who had missed him much, saw him coming, and ran to meet him, and wept with joy when he had him in his arms, and said, "Quick! bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found." Luke xv. 11–24.

33. Had Jesus any companions as He went about preaching and healing?

Yes, He was attended by men whom He called *disciples*.

34. What is a disciple?
He is a person who joins himself to a great teacher to get instruction from him.

35. How many disciples had Jesus?
A goodly number followed Him, both men and women, but there were twelve men whom He regarded as disciples more than others.

36. Whom did Jesus first call to be disciples?
He first called four men who lived by fishing in the sea of Galilee: Peter and Andrew, brothers; James and John, also brothers.

37. What did Jesus say to them when He called them?
He said: "Come ye after me and I will make you fishers of men." Matthew iv. 19, Mark i. 17.

38. Was Jesus very desirous to have disciples?
Yes, He longed to have about Him men who loved wisdom more than anything else, and who could understand and value His teaching.

39. By what words did He show this desire?
He said: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew xi. 28–30.

40. Who are those that "labour and are heavy laden?"
Jesus was very willing to have as disciples those who earned their bread with the sweat of their brows, but He meant chiefly those who had earn-

estly sought the knowledge of God and of salvation, and had not found it.

41. When did Jesus instruct His disciples?
Chiefly in seasons of retirement when He escaped from the crowds who constantly followed Him.

42. Can you name one of the places to which Jesus retired with His disciples?
The top of the hills on the west side of the sea of Galilee.

43. What were the subjects of the teaching Jesus gave to His disciples on the hill-top?
They were God, the Kingdom of God, and the Righteousness of God.

44. What did Jesus say concerning God?
He called God "Father": "your Father who is in heaven."

45. What did Jesus mean by that name?
He never exactly explained what He meant.

46. How then did the disciples know what Jesus meant?
They guessed His meaning from what they knew of their own fathers.

47. Are earthly fathers in all respects like the Father who is in heaven?
No, they sometimes give evil gifts, or refuse good gifts, to their children, but the Father in heaven, Jesus told his disciples, always gives good gifts to them that ask Him.

48. What surer means had the disciples of knowing the spirit of the Father in heaven?
They knew by the way in which Jesus used the name.

49. Can you give an example?
Jesus said: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Matthew v. 16.

50. What might disciples learn from this?
That God as their Father was delighted when they, His sons, behaved in a brave, noble, heroic manner, and were not afraid to speak the truth and do the right, even when it was dangerous.

51. Can you give another example?
In the Teaching on the Hill Jesus said concerning the Father in heaven that "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matthew v. 45.

52. What might disciples learn from this?
That their Father in heaven was great-minded, doing kind deeds even to His unworthy children, and that He desired His sons to be like Him in this.

53. In what terms did Jesus teach His disciples to be like their Father in this respect?
He said: "Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you." Matthew v. 44.

54. Can you give yet another example?
In the Teaching on the Hill Jesus said: "Behold the birds of the air: they sow not neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not of more value than they?" Matthew vi. 26.

55. What might disciples learn from this?

That God our Father careth for every living creature, but more especially for human beings, who are of more value in His eyes than birds, or beasts like sheep and oxen, and most of all for men and women who make it their chief business in this world to do good.

56. What did Jesus say concerning the Kingdom of God?
He explained its nature by telling who were its citizens.

57. In what sayings did Jesus describe the citizens of the Kingdom?
In the sayings called the *Beatitudes*, which all begin with the word "Blessed."

58. What are these sayings?
In the Teaching on the Hill Jesus spake these words:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew v. 3–10.

59. How would Jesus have us regard the Kingdom of God?

As the highest good, to be desired above food and raiment and all earthly good.

60. In what words did He teach this?

"Seek ye first the Kingdom and the Righteousness of your Father, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew vi. 33.

61. To what precious things did Jesus liken the Kingdom of God?

In two parables He likened it to a treasure hid in a field, and to a costly pearl.

62. What is the parable of the *Treasure hid in a Field?*

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in the field, which a man found and hid again, and in his joy he goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field." Matthew xiii. 44.

63. What is the parable of the *Costly Pearl?*

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls, who when he had found one pearl of great price went and sold all that he had and bought it." Matthew xiii. 46.

64. What did Jesus teach concerning righteousness?

What Jesus taught concerning righteousness may be summed up in these two precepts: Be unto God all that a son should be to a Father; treat fellow-men as brethren.

65. In what words did Jesus express these two precepts?

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Matthew xxii. 37–39.

66. In what other words did Jesus express the second of these commandments?

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Matthew vii. 12.

67. What did He add to these words?

"This is the Law and the Prophets."

68. What did He mean thereby?

He meant that the Hebrew Scriptures, called the Old Testament, teach in effect the same thing.

69. How can we show our love to God?

By doing His will, by trusting Him, and by asking of Him such things as we need.

70. Where do you learn God's will?

In the Ten Commandments.

71. What are the Ten Commandments?

They are these:

1 Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

2 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

3 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

4 Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

5 Honour thy father and thy mother.
6 Thou shalt not kill.
7 Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8 Thou shalt not steal.
9 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
10 Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbour's.

72. What did Jesus say concerning the third commandment?
He said: "Swear not at all, but let your speech be yea, yea; nay, nay." Matthew v. 34, 37.

73. What did Jesus say concerning the fourth commandment?
He said: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man made for the Sabbath." Mark ii. 27.

74. What did He mean by this?
He meant that God made the Sabbath for man's benefit, and that the day must be so kept that God's end shall be reached.

75. What else did He teach concerning the Sabbath?
He taught that acts of kindness and things which are necessary may be done on the day of holy rest.

76. With what words did He teach that acts of kindness may be done on the Sabbath?
He said: "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." Matthew xii. 12.

77. What doctrine was taught in the Jewish schools concerning the fifth commandment?
They said: Make gifts to the temple even if your father and mother should starve.

78. What did Jesus teach?

He taught that we must honour, and if needful aid, our parents first. Matthew xv. 4–6, Mark vii. 10–12.

79. What did Jesus say concerning the sixth commandment?

He said: Far from killing thy brother, thou must not even be angry with him, or call him fool. Matthew v. 21, 22.

80. What did Jesus say concerning the seventh commandment?

He forbade evil desire as well as evil acts.

81. What did Jesus say concerning the eighth commandment?

He taught that far from taking from another that which is his, we should be willing to let another take from us wrongfully that which is ours. Matthew v. 40.

82. How did Jesus teach trust in God as our Father?

He spake to His disciples these words: "Take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body than the clothing. Behold the birds of the air! they sow not neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not of much more value than they? And which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how

they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. Yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Matthew vi. 25–31.

83. How would Jesus have us pray?

In secret rather than before men, in simple words, and believing that God our Father is ever ready to grant what we ask if it be good for us to receive it.

84. How did He teach secrecy in prayer?

He said: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." Matthew vi. 6.

85. How did He teach simplicity in prayer?

He gave His disciples an example, commonly called "the Lord's Prayer."

86. What is the Lord's Prayer?

The Lord's Prayer is as follows:

"Our Father who art in heaven! Hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Matthew vi. 9–13.

87. How did Jesus teach trust in Prayer?
He said:

"Ask and it shall be given you,
Seek and ye shall find,
Knock and it shall be opened unto you.
For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.
Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent?
If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him!"

Matthew vii. 7–12.

88. Who were the scribes?
They were men who studied the law of Moses, explained it, and added to it many rules.
89. Who were the Pharisees?
They were religious people who very strictly kept all the rules of the scribes.
90. Did any of the scribes, or of the Pharisees, become disciples of Jesus?
One scribe offered to follow Jesus, but He did not wish to have him for a disciple.
91. What did Jesus say to him?
"The foxes have holes and the birds of the air

have lodging-places, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

Matthew viii. 20.

92. Whom did Jesus mean by the Son of man?
He meant Himself.

93. Why did He call Himself by that name?
Because He was humble and humane; He preferred the title "Son of man" to the title "Son of David," and He very much loved men.

94. Why did He not wish to have the scribe for a disciple?
Because He feared that in heart he was like the other scribes.

95. What was the character of the scribes?
They were proud, and they were hard-hearted. They wished to have an anointed one, a *Christ*, who should be a great King of whom they could boast, and they laid heavy legal burdens on men's shoulders.

96. Why did the scribes and Pharisees dislike Jesus?
Because He would not be a Christ such as they desired, and because He removed the burdens they laid on men's shoulders.

97. What names did they call Jesus?
They once called Him a "blasphemer" because He told a palsied man that his sins were forgiven. Matthew ix. 3.

98. What other names did they call Jesus?
They called Him a drunkard, and a glutton. Matthew xi. 19.

99. Why did they give Jesus these evil names?

Because He was kind to the poor publicans and sinners.

100. What did Jesus say when they spoke evil of Him?
He said: "Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man it shall be forgiven him." Matthew xii. 31.

101. Did the meekness of Jesus soften the scribes and Pharisees?
No, they continued to dislike Him more and more, till at length they wanted to kill Him.

102. Did Jesus know of their wicked purpose?
Yes, He knew, and He told His disciples that ere long they would put Him to death.

103. What did Jesus do when He saw what His enemies were aiming at?
He went out of their way that they might not kill Him before the due time.

104. Where did He go?
To and beyond the northern boundary of Galilee.

105. How was He occupied there?
In preparing His disciples for the end.

106. How did He do this?
By telling them plainly that He was to suffer death, and by striving to make them resigned to what was coming.

107. What means did He use for this purpose?
He told them that all who serve God faithfully in this world must suffer, that His sufferings would be for the good of the world, and that after His death He would rise again.

108. In what words did Jesus teach that the faithful must suffer?

"If any man would come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Matthew xvi. 24.

109. In what words did Jesus teach that His sufferings would be for the good of the world?

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Matthew xx. 28, Mark x. 45.

110. Were the disciples ready to receive this teaching?

No, they were slow of heart to understand it.

111. Did they believe that disaster was about to overtake their Master?

No, they expected rather that He would soon be placed on a glorious throne as the anointed, or "Messianic," Son of David, promised by the prophets of Israel, and expected by the Jews.

112. What did they expect for themselves?

They expected that they would all, as the companions of Jesus, be great, and they disputed among themselves who should be greatest.

113. How did Jesus feel when He saw this?

He was grieved by their vain thoughts and sought to correct these.

114. What did He do for this purpose?

He took a child into His arms and said: "Unless ye be like this child ye cannot be great in the kingdom of heaven, ye cannot even enter it at all." Matthew xviii. 2–4; Mark ix. 36, 37.

115. Did Jesus love children?

Yes. Once when mothers brought their children to be blessed by Him, and the disciples tried to keep them away, He said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." Mark x. 14.

116. What happened to Jesus in Bethany a few days before His death?

A woman, by name Mary, poured a vase of precious ointment on His head while He sat at table.

117. What did Jesus say concerning this action?

"Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be spoken of for a memorial of her." Matthew xxvi. 13, Mark xiv. 9.

118. Why did He say this?

Because Mary's act, though blamed as waste by the disciples, was noble, and because her act in breaking the alabaster vase and shedding its contents, was like His own in yielding Himself to be crucified. Both were acts of generous love.

119. What solemn transaction took place on the night before Jesus was crucified?

Jesus took bread, blessed it, brake it, gave it to His disciples, and said: "Take, eat, this is my body." Then he took a cup of wine, blessed it also, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my blood shed for many." Mark xiv. 22–25.

120. What did this action signify?

It signified that the death of Jesus was at last at

hand, and that it was not to be deplored, because it was to bring a great blessing to the world, salvation from sin.

121. How are we to regard the death of Jesus?

He died, the just one for the unjust, that He might bring them to God.

122. What affections should we cherish towards Him who died for the sinful?

We should love Him with all our hearts as our Saviour, and worship Him and serve Him as our Lord.

123. Where is Jesus now?

He is in the house of His Father in heaven, where He is preparing a place for all who bear His name and walk in His footsteps.

THE END

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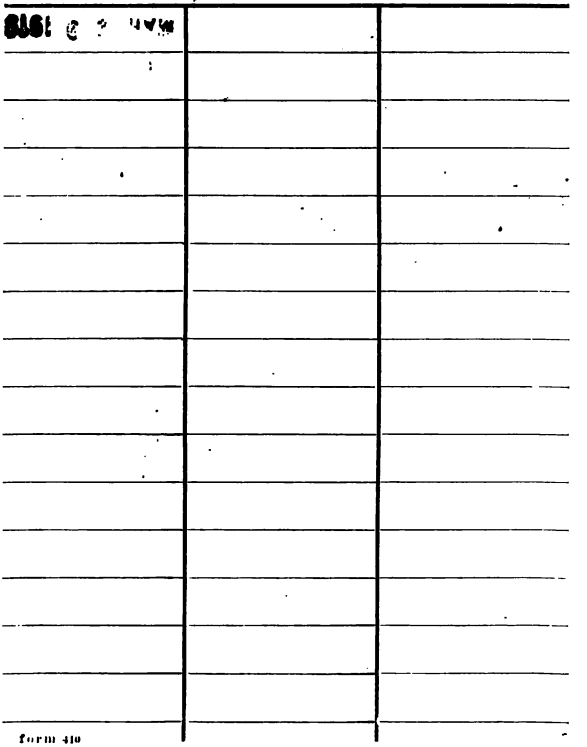
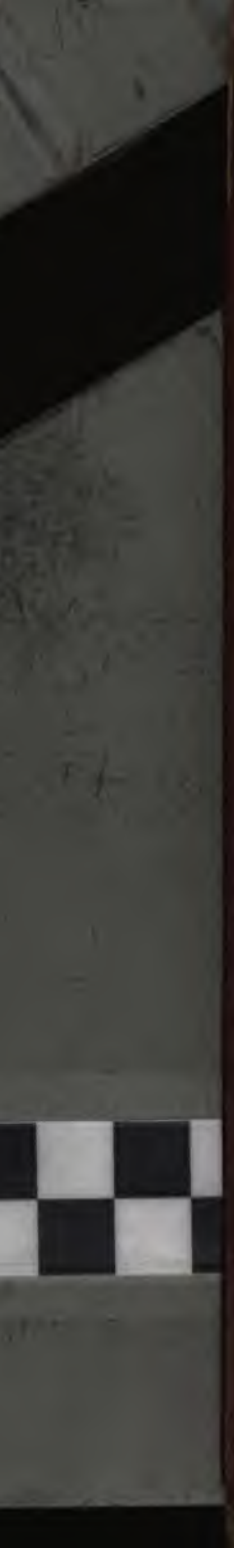
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